# THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

VOL. I

A STANDARD BOOK
BY

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# THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

VOL. I

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# CONTENTS

**Subject** **Page**



## CHAPTER (1)
## HISTORY OF THE ARABS



## CHAPTER (2)
## THE LIFE OF PROPHET MOHAMMAD

Page



## CHAPTER (3)
## EXPOSITION OF THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

Page

Page

# THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

## *PREFACE*

The purpose of this book is to give to English readers a concise and fair history of the Prophet Mohammad and to present an accurate account of the religion of Islam wrongly called (Mohammedanism) which he taught - a religion which has become the faith of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. I have been moved to undertake this work by meeting renowned Englishmen brought to Egypt in connection with the Great War (1914-1918) who evinced a real desire to acquire some true knowledge of the principles of Islam - the dominant religion of the country. I tried to satisfy their curiosity just as far as my limited intercourse permitted. Finally it was suggested to me that I should write a treatise on the subject for the use of English speaking inquirers to familiarize them in a general way with the doctrines of the religion practiced by several millions of British subjects. I considered it a duty to comply with the suggestion - first in regard to the religion of Islam, as I have as yet hardly found a single treatise which properly explains the essence of that creed and is at the same time free from defects or misrepresentation; and secondly, in regard to the members of the Anglo-Saxon race, through whose language I was able to pursue my studies successfully.

Apparently, English writers, or rather writers of the Christian persuasion who dealt with Islam, seem either to have obtained their knowledge of that religion haphazardly from untrustworthy sources, or have allowed their judgment to have been biased by their own Christian outlook; and this partiality has, consciously or otherwise, changed them from honest historians to critics - and at times malignant critics.

In compiling this book I have set before me a high ideal to be a true historian and a conscientious writer, to abstain, not only from eulogy and partisanship, but also from scoffing and misplaced criticism. My sole endeavor is to give the reader a true account of the life of the Prophet Mohammad and a fair exposition of the religion he taught.

As the history of the Arabs has a very close connection with the life of the Arabian Prophet and the rise and development of Islam, I have dedicated Part I of the Book to a summary of that history and to the exposition of the social, moral, political and religious conditions of the Arabs prior to the advent of Islam.

With regard to the present work, the author, who is an Egyptian Muslim, lays no claim to the art of elegant composition in English. But further he is of opinion that if this ability were within nature, the principal merit of which is simple fidelity.

I desire above all things, that in a humble way, this book may be the ambassador of good will and understanding between Muslims and those of other faiths.

*Ahmed A. Galwash*

# INTRODUCTION

The diffusion of knowledge all over the world and the spread of civilization have very largely lessened the difference between one nation and another and have almost subdued the flames of animosity kindled in men's bosoms by blind fanaticism evoked by religion or creed.

History relates many awful wars waged in the name of religion. Today, however, men are largely imbued with the spirit of toleration and love of truth and liberty. The more enlightened do respect the doctrines and principles of their fellow men, however widely they differ from their own. The followers of different religions make earnest endeavors to spread their own faith and to plant their standards even farther a field. It is left to reason to examine and judge the respective merits of each. Christian missionaries in the Orient may be heard loudly preaching Christianity to followers of Moses and Mohammad without the least apprehension of any unlawful opposition on the part of their hearers.

From time to time, we read of some distinguished person who has abandoned the religion of his forefathers to adopt a different persuasion, which, in the light of reason he has found more acceptable. Further the spirit of intelligent curiosity has been so fully developed in human beings by education, that books which deal with the dogmas and tenets of different nations are eagerly read. The widest possible knowledge of these is sought and at times an attachment to new beliefs is not hidden, nor a readiness to adopt them.

On the other hand, the more highly a nation is civilized the more it is inclined to make known its customs, habits and national religious character.

Although some vague knowledge of the laws and tenets of Islam may be obtained from treatises and books which have been composed by certain Westerners, yet he who desires thoroughly to comprehend their spirit must trace them to the fountain-head. In the ordinary intercourse of life, he who is desirous of gaining the esteem and affection of those with whom he converses will be careful not to offend against their religious precepts and notions of right and wrong, with which precepts and notions he can become acquainted by consulting their own records.

Furthermore, it behooves those ministers and missionaries of the Christian faith whose zeal leads them to labor in the propagation of their own doctrines and in attempts to refute the tenets and precepts of other religions, to be well acquainted with those things which they undertake to impugn.

The learned Roland[1] has shown that "Christian writers of no small eminence in point of learning and reputation have egregiously misrepresented the doctrines of Muslim faith, and bestowed much useless labor, in confuting opinions which the followers of the Arabian Prophet never maintained; thus exposing themselves to the charge of ignorance and the contempt of their adversaries; and injuring the cause they had undertaken to defend, by making it appear to stand in need of false allegations for its support."

Indeed, it is misrepresentation and misinformation, from which Muslims chiefly suffer. They have had imputed to them that which has no existence whatever in their teachings and polity; baseless charges have been advanced against Islam; nay, the very beauties which Muslims account amongst their exclusive possessions have been denied them, and the very evils which Islam came to eradicate and did succeed in so doing, are ascribed to it. It is certainly, a great pity that, with all this outpouring of learning and literature, very little real effort has been made to clear away the clouds of misrepresentation and defective knowledge which still envelop the religion of the Arabian Prophet in Europe and America.

It is a happy sign, however, to find plans for a universal religion

(1) De Relig. Mohammedica. L. II.

being discussed in certain advanced circles in both continents, and a desire to create a better understanding among adherents of the various denominations of the world.

To achieve this desirable end, it is inconsistent with the advanced culture of enlightened European or American enquirers that information on Islam - a religion which at present is a powerful factor in humanizing millions hitherto living in ignorance and barbarity - should come through any adulterated channels and from the writings and works of propagandists hostile to Islam.

Undoubtedly a true knowledge of the life of the Prophet and of his principal teachings is full of interest to those who desire to increase their general stock of information. Indeed the doctrines of Islam tend in general to promote the welfare and prosperity of mankind, in as much as they cultivate charity and good will to all people.(1)

The Prophet said "No man's faith shall be perfect unless he wishes for his brother whatsoever he wishes for himself."

That Islam was admittedly the torch-bearer of light and learning in the West when Europe was enshrouded in ignorance and darkness, and that the followers of the Holy Prophet were undoubtedly among the very few factors creating the conditions leading to present culture and advancement, are in themselves cogent reasons to justify and appeal to the Westerner's sense of duty and justice in judging Islam and the Muslims.

An honest student of the tenets of Islam and the labors of Muslims for the regeneration and edification of mankind, especially of Europe, cannot fail to find much for which Islam should be thanked.

I quote Major Arthur Glyn Leonard in this connection:

"Never to this day has Europe acknowledged in an honest and wholehearted manner the great and everlasting debt she owes to Islamic

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(1) Bosworth Smith: "Mohamed and Mohammedanism"

culture and civilization. Only in a lukewarm and perfunctory way has she recognized that when, during the dark ages, her people were sunk in feudalism and ignorance, Muslim civilization under the Arabs reached a high standard of social and scientific splendor that kept the flickering members of European society from utter decadence."

"Do not we, who now consider ourselves the topmost pinnacle ever reached by culture and civilization, recognize that, had it not been for the high culture, the civilization and intellectual, as well as the social splendors of the Arabs and soundness of their system, Europe would to this day have remained sunk in the darkness of ignorance? Have we forgotten that the Muslim maxim was that, the real learning of a man is of more public importance than any particular religious opinions he may entertain, that Muslim liberality was in striking contrast with the then intolerant state of Europe? Does the magnificent valor of the Arabs, inspired as it was by atheism as lofty as it was pure, not appeal to us? Does not the moderation and comparative toleration shown by them to the conquered, notwithstanding the fierce and burning ardor to regenerate mankind that impelled them onward to conquest, also appeal to us? Does it not all the more appeal to us when we contrast this with the bitterness of the attitude of the Christian sects towards one another? Especially when we consider that in Christendom, as it was then constituted, extortion, tyranny and imperial centralization, combining with ecclesiastical despotism and persecution, had practically extinguished patriotism, by substitution in its place a schismatic and degenerate Church?"

Further the same writer continues to say:

"Is it possible that Europe is unmindful of, and has the ingratitude to ignore the splendid services of the scientists and philosophers of the Arabs? Are the names of Assamh, Abu Othman, Alberuni, Albeithar, Abu Aly Ibn Sina (Avicenna) the great physician and philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) of Cordova, the chief commentator of Arisotle, Ibn Bajja (Anempace) besides a host of others but dead letters? Is the great work they have done and the fame they have left behind them in their books to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion, by an ungrateful but antipathetic Europe?"

"It cannot be that already we have lost sight of the amazing intellectual activity of the Muslim world during the earlier part of the 'Abbasids' period more especially. It cannot be that we have quite forgotten the irrecoverable loss that was inflicted on Arabian literature, and on the world at large, by the wanton destruction of thousands of books that was promoted by Christian bigotry and fanaticism? It cannot be surely said of Christian Europe that for centuries now she has done her best to hide obligations to the Arabs; yet most assuredly, obligations such as these, are far too sacred to lie much longer hidden."[1]

For further enlightenment as to the far reaching beneficial effects of Islam I quote Bosworth Smith, M.A., Asst. master in Harrow School and late fellow of Trinity College, Oxford:

"Nor does Islam lack other claims on our attention. its ultimate acceptance by the Arabs, the new direction given to it by the later revelations to Mohammed, its rapid conquests, the literature and civilization it brought in its train, the way in which it crumpled up the Roman Empire on one side and the Persian on the other, how it drove Christianity before it on the West and north and fire worship on the East and South; how it crushed the false prophets that follow in the wake of a true one, as the jackals do the trail of a lion, how it spread over two continents, and how it settled in a third and at one time all but overwhelmed the whole... all this is matter of history, at which I can only glance."

And what is the position now?

"It numbers at this day more than one hundred millions, probably one hundred and fifty millions[2][*] of believers as sincere, as devout, as true to their creed, as are the believers in any creed whatever. It still has its grip on three continents, extending from Morocco to the Malay Peninsula, from Zanzibar to the Kirghis horde..."

"... Africa, which had yielded so early to Christianity, nay, which had given birth to Latin Christianity itself, the Africa of Cyprian and

(1)"Islam" Her Moral and Spiritual Value", by Major Arthur Glyn Leonard.

(2) The number is assumed at present 1968 to be about four hundred million. (Author).

(*)The number is assumed at present 2007 to be about more than one billion.

Tertullian, of Anthony and Augustine, yielded still more readily to Mohammed; and from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Isthmus of Suez may still be heard the cry which with them is no vain repetition of 'Allah Akbar, God is Greater, there Is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet.'"

"And if it be said, as it often is, that Islam has gained nothing since the first flame of religious enthusiasm fanned, as it then often was, by the lust of conquest, has died out, I answer that this is far from the truth."

"In the extreme East, Islam has since then won and maintained for centuries a moral supremacy in the important Chinese province of Yunnan, and has thus actually succeeded in thrusting a wedge between the two great Buddhist empires of Burma and of China..."

"Throughout the Chinese Empire there are scattered Mussulman communities who have higher hopes than Buddhism or Confucianism, and a purer morality than Taoism can supply. The Panthays themselves, it is believed, still number a million and a half, and the unity of God and the mission of God's Prophet are attested day by day by a continuous line of worshippers from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean."

"Nay, even beyond, in the East Indian Archipelago, beyond the straits of Malacca if I may venture just now so to call them, in Java and Sumatra, in Borneo and Celebes, Islam has raised many of the natives above their former selves and has long been the dominant faith..."

"It cannot of course, be supposed that among races so low in the scale of humanity as are most of the Indian islanders, Islam would be able to do what it did originally for the Arabs or for the Turkish hordes ; but it has done something even for them. It was propagated by missionaries who cared very much for the souls they could win, and nothing for the plunder they could carry off. They conciliated the natives, learned their language, intermarried with them and in larger islands their success was rapid, and, so far as nature would allow, complete."(1)

(1) Crawford's "Indian Archipelago" II, 275 and 315.

"The Philippines and the Malaccas, which were conquered by Spain and Portugal respectively, did not become Muslims for they had to surrender at once their liberty and their religion. It is no wonder that the religion, known to the natives chiefly through the unblushing rapacity of the Dutch, has not extended itself beyond the reach of their swords. Here, as elsewhere in the East, the most fatal hindrance to the spread of Christianity has been the lives of Christians."[1]

"In Africa again Islam is spreading itself by giant strides almost year by year. Everyone knows that within half a century of the Prophet's death, the richest states of Africa, and those most accessible to Christianity and to European Civilization, were torn away from both, by the armies of the faithful, with hardly a struggle or a regret; but few, except those who have studied the subject, are aware that ever since then Islam has been gradually spreading over the northern half of the continent."

"Starting from the northwest corner, it first marched southwards from Morocco, and by the time of the Norman Conquest had reached the neighborhood of Timbuktu, and had got firm hold of the Mandingoes, thence it spread southwards again to the Foulahs, and then eastward by the thirteenth century to Lake Chad, where finally the Arab missionaries from the West joined hands with those from the East in the very heart of Africa..."

"We hear of whole tribes laying aside their devil-worship or immemorial Fetish and springing at a bound, as it were, from the very lowest to one of the highest forms of religious belief. Christian travelers with every wish to think otherwise, have remarked that the Negro, who accepts Islam, acquires at once a sense of the dignity of human nature not commonly found even among those who have been brought to accept Christianity."

"It is also pertinent to observe here, that such progress as any large part of the negro race has hitherto made, is in exact proportion to the time

(1) For the cruelties of the Portuguese, see Crawford's II, 403 and for the Dutch see especially II, d25 and 411. For some startling facts as to the comparative morality of some native and Christian communities in India, see a paper by Rev. J.N. Thorburn in the Report for the Allahabad Missionary Conference, held in 1872-73 p. 467-470.

that has elapsed, or the degree of fervor, with which they originally embraced, or have since clung, to Islam. The Mandingoes and the Foulahs are salient instances of this their unquestionable superiority to other negro tribes is as unquestionably owing to the early hold that Islam got upon them and to the civilization and culture that it has always encouraged. The Government Blue Books on our West African settlements, and the reports of missionary societies themselves, are quite at one on this head. The Governor of our West African Colonies, Mr. Pope Hennessy, remarks that the liberated Africans are always handed over to Christian missionaries for instruction, and that their children are baptized and brought up at the public expense in Christian schools, and are, therefore, in a sense, ready made converts, yet the total number of professing Christians, 35,000 out of a population of 513,000, very few even of these, as the Governor says, and as we can unfortunately well believe from our experience in countries that are not African, being practical Christians - fall far short of the original number of liberated Africans and their descendents.(1) On the other hand. the Rev. James Johnson, a native clergyman, and a man of remarkable energy and intelligence, as well as of very Catholic spirit, deplores the fact that of the total number of Muslims to be found in Sierra Leone and its neighborhood three fourths were not born Muslims, but have become so by conversion, whether from a nominal Christianity or from Paganism.(1)

"We are assured on all hands that the Muslim population has an almost passionate desire for education, and those in the neighborhood of our colonies would throng our schools, first if the practical education given was worth having, and secondly, if the teachers would refrain from needlessly attacking their cherished and often harmless customs. Wherever Muslims are numerous, they establish schools themselves, and there are not a few who travel extraordinary distances to secure the best possible

(1) Papers relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possession. Part II. 1873, 2nd Division, p.p. 14-15. As Mr. Pope Hennessy's Report has been much criticized, chiefly on the ground that he is a Roman Catholic, and as I have based some statements upon it, it may be worth mentioning that I have had a conversation with Mr. Johnson, who is a strong protestant himself, and that he bore testimony to the bona fides of the Report and to its accuracy even on some points which have been most questioned. He told me that Islam was introduced into Sierra Leone not many years ago by three zealous missionaries who came from a great distance. It seems now to be rapidly gaining the ascendancy In spite of all the European influence at work.

education. Mr. Pope Hennessy mentions the case of one young Muslim Negro who is in the habit of purchasing costly books from Trubner in London and who went to Foulahs, two hundred and fifty miles away, to obtain an education better than he could find in Sierra Leone itself, nor is it an uncommon thing for newly converted Muslims to make their way right across the desert from Bornu or from Lake Chad, or down the Nile from Darfour or Wadi, a journey of over one thousand miles that they carry on their studies in **El-Azhar**, the great collegiate Mosque at Cairo, and they may thence bring back the results of their training to their native country, and from so many centers of Muslim teaching and example.

"Nor as to the effects of Islam when first embraced by a Negro tribe can there be any reasonable doubt. Polytheism disappears almost instantaneously, sorcery with its attendant evils, gradually dies away; human sacrifice becomes a thing of the past. The general moral elevation is most marked; the natives begin for the first time in their history to dress neatly. Squalid filth is replaced by a scrupulous cleanliness; inhospitality becomes a comparatively rare exception. Though polygamy is allowed by the Koran, it is not common in practice; and, beyond the limits laid down by the Prophet, incontinence is rare; chastity is looked upon as one of the highest and becomes in fact one of the commoner virtues. It is idleness henceforward that degrades, instead of the reverse. Offences are henceforward measured by a written code instead of the arbitrary caprice of a chieftain - a step as everyone will admit, of vast importance in the progress of a tribe. The Mosque gives an idea at all event higher than any the Negro has yet had. A thirst for literature is created, and that for works of science and philosophy, as well as for commentaries on the Koran. There are whole tribes, as the Jalofs on the river Gambia and the Haussas, whose many qualities we have had occasions to test in Ashantee, which have become to a man Muslim, and have raised themselves infinitely in the process; and the very name salt-water-Muslims given to those tribes along the coast, who, from admixture with European settlers, have relaxed the severity of the prophet's laws, is a striking proof of the extent, to which the stricter form of the faith prevails in the far interior."

"It is melancholy to contrast with these wide spread beneficial influences of Islam, the little that has been done for Africa till very lately

by the Christian nations that have settled in it, and the still narrower limits, within which it has been confined. Till a few years ago the good effects produced beyond the immediate territories occupied by them were absolutely nothing..."

"The message that European traders have carried for centuries to Africa has been one of rapacity, of cruelty and of bad faith. It is a remark of Dr. Livingstone's[1] that the only art 'that the nations of Africa have acquired from their 500 years' acquaintance with the Portuguese, has been the art of distilling spirits from a gun-barrel; and that the only permanent belief they owe to them, is the belief that man may sell his brother man; for this, he says emphatically, is not a native benefit to Africa; but if we except the small number of converts made within the limits of their settlements, it has been the only benefit conferred by Europeans."

"Truly if the question must be put, whether it is Muslim or Christian nations that have as yet done most for Africa, the answer must be that it is not the Christian..."[2]

I think I can occupy no more space in this introduction by making further quotations to discuss the relation of Islam to modern civilization and the position which it holds among the recognized religions of the world. It is a matter of pure history that Islam has been beneficial to humanity in general and that it had, and still has, an everlasting influence on the development of human character.

The Muslim School embraces all branches of human knowledge and research - theology, medicine, history, astronomy, grammar, economics, physics, racial philosophy and racial psychology and ethics. It is an important educator on all systems of purely human origin, and its creed adores, worships and acknowledges the Creator of the Universe, in the most sublime, loftiest and divine expression, never to be found in the liturgy of other religions. The Islamic conception of God is that He is **'Allah'** and there is no deity beside Him; He alone is to be worshipped. He begets not and He is not begotten. He was before time began its race.

(1) Livingstone's "Expedition to the Zambesi' page 240.
(2) R. Bosworth Smith "Mohamed and Mohammedanism".

He is **'Allah'** who hath raised different prophets of men throughout the ages. His greatness is immeasurable. Allah is He that abideth from eternity to eternity. This is but a fractional part of the Muslim Creed - a creed which strictly, forbids the worship of images and the artistic representation of anything that resembles the human form. Yet in Christian literature, periodicals and other publications Muslims have been alluded to, and spoken of, as pagans, idolaters, polygamists, sun worshippers and what not. Our sacred edifice has been characterized as the Mosque of swords, our heaven as a heaven of sensual bliss, and that after death we sink into space soulless, and have no account to give.

In romance of "Turpin" quoted by Renan, Mohammed, the fanatical destroyer of all idolatry, is turned himself into an idol of gold and under the name of Mawmet, is reported to be the object of worship at Cadiz. In the song of Roland, the National Epic of France, Mohammed appears with the chief of the Pagan Gods on the one side of him and the chief of the Devils on the other. Human sacrifices are supposed to have been offered to him; in the imagination end assertions of Christian writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries he appeared under the various names of Bafum, or Maphomet, or Mawmet. Malaterra, in his history of Sicily describes that Island as being, when under Saracenic rule, a land wholly given up to idolatry.[(1)] It is not a little curious that both the English and French languages still bear witness to the popular misapprehension; the French by the word. "Mahomerie", the English by the word "Mummery", still used for absurd or superstitious rites[(2)], "Mammetry", a contraction of Mahometry was used in early English for any false religion, especially for worship of idols, insomuch that "Mammet" or "Mawmet" came to mean an idol. In Shakespeare the name is extended to mean a doll. Juliet, for instance, is called by her father "A whining Mummet"[(3)]. In the twelfth century "the god Mawmet" passes the heresiarch Mahomet, and as such, of course he occupies conspicuous place in the 'Inferno'.

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(1) "Which people were the greater idolaters any candid reader of the Italian analysts of this time collected by Muratori can say". Bosworth Smith "Mohamed and Mohammedanism".

(2) See Trench on "Words", p. 112.

(3)"Mawmet (cont. fr. Mohamet) a puppet; a doll; originally an idol because In the Middle Ages it was generally believed that the Mohammedan Worshipped Images representing Mohammed". Webster's Dictionary.

Dante places him in his ninth circle among the sowers of religious discord; his companions being Fra Dolima, a communist of the fourteenth century, and Berterand de Born, a fighting Troubadour.

The Romances of Baphomet, so common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, attribute any and every crime to him, just as the Athanasians did to Arius. He is a debauchee, a camel stealer, and a cardinal, who having failed to obtain the object of every cardinal's ambition, invents a new religion to revenge himself on his brethren.[1]

With the leaders of the Reformation, Mohamed "the greatest of all Reformers"[2] meets with little sympathy and their hatred of him, as perhaps was natural, seems to be proportionate with their knowledge. Luther doubts whether he is not worse than Leo; Melanchton believes him to be either Gag or Maggog, probably both.[3]

In the imagination of the Biblical commentators, the Arabian Prophet divides with the Pope the credit, or discredit, of being the subject of special prophecy in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. "He is Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the Little Horn" and is known at what the eighteenth century, treats of him as otherwise than a rank impostor and false prophet.[4]

England and France were the first to take a different view and to have begun that critical study of Arabian history or literature which in the hands of Gibbon and of Muir, of Caussin de Perceval and of St Hilaire, of Weil and of Springer has provided some material for a comparatively fair and unbiased judgment within the reach of everyone. But most other writers of the 18th century such as Dean Prideaux and the Abbé Maracci, Boulainvilliers and Voltaire have approached the subject only to prove a thesis. With them the Prophet was to be either a hero or an impostor. "From them is learnt much that has been said about Mohammed, but comparatively little of Mohammed himself."[5]

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(1) Renas "Etudes d'Histoire Religieuse", p. 223, note.
(2) Bosworth Smith.
(3) See "Quarterly Review" Srt, Islam, by Detach, No. 254, p. 296.
(4) Bosworth Smith.
(5) Bosworth Smith.

Gagnier has then proceeded to write a history of the Prophet claimed to have been based on the work of Abul Feda. Gagnier's history was still not free from wrong inferences and erroneous allusions.[1]

Then followed the translations of the "Koran" by Sale and Savary into English and French respectively. Gibbon has then written his "three masterpieces of biography": Athanasius, Gulian, and "Mohammed". Gibbon's treatment of Islam is considered to be generally fair and philosophic, "in spite of occasional uncalled for sarcasms and characteristic innuendoes."[2] It seems that Gibbon's so called unfair treatment of Christianity prevented the Christian world from doing justice to his generally fair treatment of Islam and consequently most Englishmen who do not condemn the Arabian Prophet unheard, derive what favorable notions of him they have, not from Gibbon, but from Carlyle.[3]

It was really a great surprise and an epoch in English intellectual and religious life, as Bosworth Smith has rightly observed, when it was found that Carlyle chose for his "Hero as Prophet not Moses or Elijah or Isaiah, but the so-called impostor Mohammed."[4]

Now it is time to conclude this introduction. The reader will see and judge for himself the extent to which European writers of various reputations and in various ages have been, in their different treatments of the Prophet Mohammed and of Islam, either misleading or themselves misled.

In conclusion I wish to express my heartfelt obligation to my numerous friends both in Egypt and abroad for their kind assistance and encouragement which enabled me to bring this work to completion. I wish it were possible for me to name them all, but certain considerations prevent my doing so.

My gratitude is due to His Eminence Sheikh Mohammed Mostapha

(1) Ibid.
(2) Bosworth Smith.
(3) Bosworth Smith.
(4) Ibid.

El Maraghi, Grand Rector of Al Azhar University, through whose personal suggestion the book has been accredited by that great Muslim Institution for publication as a supplement to Al-Azhar Official Monthly Organ.

Special mention must, however, be made of Professor Mohamed Khaled Hassanein of Al Azhar University who was so kind to revise the manuscript and check the proofs.

In my human endeavors I humbly implore the Almighty God, the God of all mankind, to grant that my labor may serve as a basis, if not for an ultimate agreement between Christendom and Islam, at all events for mutual understanding and forbearance, for sympathy and respect.

*Ahmed A. Galwash.*

# Chapter (1)

## HISTORY OF THE ARABS

### A SUMMARY

Arabia is the great western peninsula of Asia. Its area is about 1,230,000 square miles, i.e. about one third of Europe. The name is said to be derived from "Araba", a small district in the south east of the province of Tehama, to which Yarab, the son of Kahtan (The Biblical 'Joktan'), the father of the ancient Arabs gave his name, and where some ages after dwelt Ishmael the son of Abraham and Hagar.

The chief province in connection with the history of Islam is known as the Hijaz, which occupies the western strip of Arabia to the east of the Red Sea and contains the famous cities of Mecca and Medina. The former of these claims the distinction of being, the birth place of the Prophet and possesses the celebrated sanctuary of the Kaaba, and the second was the home of the Prophet for the last ten years of his life, and in it he was laid to rest.

The shrine of Kaaba is stated to have been originally built by Abraham and Ishmael for the worship of the true God, but in after times it became the common pantheon of pagan Arabia. The peninsula of Arabia has always been inhabited by two classes: town dwellers and those who live in tents. The former live by tillage, the cultivation of palm-trees, cattle breeding, and the exercise of trades, and even in the time of Jacob, were famous as merchants. The members of the tribe of Quraish, the wealthiest and most distinguished of the Arabian tribes,

were especially engaged in commerce, and Mohammad in his youth was brought as a trader, as it was the Arabian custom for sons to carry on the business of their fathers. The Arabs who dwelt in tents were occupied with the pasturing of their flocks, varied by the raiding of caravans and pillaging of travelers. They lived chiefly on milk, dates and camel flesh; they changed their habitation as the convenience of water and of pasture required, staying no longer in one place when these failed.

Whether townsmen or tent-dwellers, the Arabs have always been divided into tribes and clans, each having its own habits, customs, mental outlook and peculiarities and being more or less distinct from the others in mode of worship, in culture and in development. This diversity of culture was mainly due to diversity of origin. Various races had inhabited the peninsula in various ages. Many of these had passed away, but their failure or success to add luster to the Arab race, was ever fresh in the memory of successive generations, and on this tradition the early history of the nation was based.

The most famous tribes of the ancient Arabs were those of Aad, Thamoud and Amalik. The destruction of the first two tribes by God for refusing to acknowledge the missions of his prophets to them or to obey them, is frequently referred to in the Koran as instances of God's judgment on obstinate unbelievers and a warning to the Quraishites, the tribe of Mohammad who were his most powerful and inveterate enemies.

According to tradition, the Adites appeared at one time to have been a powerful and conquering people. They are said to have invaded Babylonia 2000 years B.C.[1]. The Thamudites were people who lived in houses carved in the rock. The ruins of these habitations are described in Sir Henry Layard's "Early Travels". The tribe of Amalik rendered itself so powerful that before the time of the Prophet Joseph it conquered the middle of Lower Egypt and furnished several of her Kings, known to history as the "Shepherd Kings"[2]. After they had possessed the throne of Egypt for some generations, they were expelled by the inhabitants and finally were destroyed utterly by the Egyptians.[3]

(1) George Sale's translation of the Koran Preliminary Discourse.

(2) Sir Henry Layard's "Early Travels"

(3) G. Sale.

The Arabs of today are descended from two Stocks -1- Kahtan (Biblical Joktan), son of Eber and -2- Adnan, who descended in a direct line from Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The former are considered as pure Arabs, the latter as naturalized Arabs. The posterity of Ishmael had intermarried and settled among the Kahtanic Arabs and had become amalgamated with them into one nation.

The Arabians were for some centuries governed by descendants of Kahtan, Yarab one of his sons, founding the kingdoms of Yemen in the south and Jorham, another, that of Hijaz in the north.

The descendants of Yarab, known as the kings of Himyar, continued to reign undisturbed over Yemen until the time of Alexander the Great. The first great calamity that befell the tribes who settled there, was the inundation of Arem which happened about 340 B.C., one of the leading events in the history of Arabia.

Many tribes had to abandon their dwellings on this occasion, and from the scattered tribes rose two other kingdoms, known as Ghassan and Hira. According to the story of the inundation referred to above, Abd Shams, surnamed Saba`, one of the famous Kings of the tribe of Himyar having built the city of Saba, (first named after him and afterwards called Maareb), constructed a vast reservoir to store up the water of the mountain torrents for the use of the inhabitants in the years of drought. The dam was so firmly built that there seemed no probability of its bursting. The water rose to the height of twenty fathoms and was kept in on every side by masonry so solid that many of the inhabitants of the province had their houses built on its walls. Each family had a certain portion of this water distributed by aqueducts. But at last (according to tradition), God being highly displeased at their great pride and insolence, and resolving to humble and disperse them, caused a mighty flood to break down by night and carry away the whole city, with the neighboring towns and people.[1]

The tribes which remained in Yemen after this terrible occurrence still continued under the rule of the original princes till about 70 years

(1) Abulfida History.

before the birth of Mohammad, when the King of Ethiopia sent over forces to assist the Christians of Yemen against the cruel persecution of their King Zul Nowas, a bigoted Jew. They attacked him so closely that he forced his horse into the sea, and so lost his life, and the country was then governed by four Ethiopian Princes in turn till Seif ibn Zi Yazan of the tribe of Himyar, having obtained from Khosrous Anushirwan, King of Persia, assistance, which had been denied him by the Emperor Heraclius, recovered the throne and drove out the Ethiopians, but was himself slain by some of the enemy who had been left behind.

The Persians appointed the succeeding princes till Yemen fell into the hands of the Prophet Mohamed, to whom Bazan, the last of them, submitted and embraced Islam at the same time(1). The kingdom of the Himyarites is said to have lasted 2000 years.

It has already been observed that two kingdoms were founded by those who left their country on account of the inundation of Arem. They were neither from Arabia properly so called. One was the kingdom of Ghassan. The founders of this kingdom were of the tribe of Azd, settled in Syria Damascena near a spring called Ghassan, whence they took their name. This kingdom, according to Abulfeda, lasted 600 years, until the *Khalifa* Omar subjected the whole of Syria to the rule of Islam.

The other kingdom was that of *Hira* which was founded in *Khaldea* of Iraq. This kingdom was better known as the kingdom of *Mondhirs* of the tribe of *Lakhm*. These princes retained their throne (except for a short period during which the Persians held the reins of government) till the time of the *Khalifa* Abu Bakr, when Al *Monthir* el *Maghrour*, the last of them, lost his throne and life in battle with Khalid Ibn el-Walid the Muslim conqueror of Syria. This kingdom lasted 620 years.

The kingdom of Hijaz, as already observed, was founded by Jorham, the son of Kahtan, and remained in the hands of this family until the time of Ishmael. The latter married the daughter of Modar, one of the Jorhamite kings, and she bore him twelve Sons, one of whom, Kidar by name, inherited the crown from his uncle. The descendants of Kidar

(1) Ed. Pockock.

expelled the *Jorhamite* tribe who, retiring to *Juhayna*, was after various fortunes at last destroyed by an inundation.[1] Finally the government of *Hijaz* was shared by the heads of tribes almost in the same way as the Arabs of the desert are governed at present.

Mecca was in the hands of an aristocracy that controlled affairs of state until the time of the Prophet Mohammad, to whose tribe the custody of the famous pantheon of *Kaaba* was transferred.

Thus have the Arabs preserved their liberty and independence, of which few nations can show so glorious and unbroken a record, even from the very Deluge; for though great armies have been sent against them, all attempts to subdue them have failed.[2]

Neither the Assyrian nor the Median Empires ever found a footing in Arabia, and the Persian rulers never succeeded in making her tributary and were so far from being her master, that Cambyses, on his expedition against Egypt, was obliged to ask permission to pass through her territories.

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, the Arabians held him in so little awe that they alone of all the neighboring nations, sent no ambassadors to him at any time. This want of respect and the desire of possessing so rich a country, made him form a design against it, and had he not died before he could put it into execution, this people might possibly have convinced him that he was not invincible.[3]

## THEIR RELIGION

The religion of the Arabs before Islam was in the main gross idolatry, the Sabian religion or idolatry being the most widely extended among the whole nation, though there were also considerable numbers of Christians, Jews and Magians among them. The Sabians believed in God. However,

(1) Ibid, p. 74.
(2) G.Sale.
(3) Ibid.

they worshipped also stars and planets and angels as well as images; they honored them as deities and they begged for their intercession with God. They did not consider the idols to be direct agents, though they offered sacrifices and offerings to them, as well as to God, who was often put off with the lesser portion. Thus when they planted fruit trees, or sowed a field, they divided their cultivation by a line into two parts, setting aside one part for their idols and the other for God; if any of the fruits happened to fall from the idols parts, into God's they made restitution, but if from God's part into the idols' they made no restitution. Also when they watered the idols' land if the water broke over the channels made for that purpose and ran Gods part, they damned it up again, but if the water ran into the idols part, they let it run on, saying they (the idols) wanted what was God's but He wanted nothing. In the same manner, if the offering designed for God happened to be better than that designed for the idols, they made an exchange, but not otherwise. It was from this idolatry or worship of inferior deities, or "the companions of God" as the Arabs used to call them, that the Prophet Mohammad reclaimed his nation by establishing among them the undivided worship of the true God.[1]

There were seven celebrated temples, dedicated to the seven planets, adored by the whole nation, though each tribe had chosen one planet as the peculiar object of its worship. The tribe of *Himyar* worshipped in general the sun, the tribe of *Misam* the Bullseye, the tribes of *Lakhm* and *Jorham*, Gorhem, the tribe of *Keis*, Sirius or the Dog star, that of *Assad*, Mercury, the tribe of *Tay* worshipped Canopus, while the temple of Mecca was dedicated to Saturn. For the worship of angels and intelligences there were other celebrated, peculiar idols, ten of which are mentioned in the Koran; they are: Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manata which were called "Goddesses" and "Daughters of God". Al-Lat was the idol of the tribe of *Thakif*. Al-Uzza was the deity of *Ghatfan*; Manata was the favorite idol of *Kuza`a* and *Huzail*. There were two other celebrated idols, namely Al *Jibt* and *Taghout* which are also referred to in the Koran. They were of the chief idols of the tribe of Quraish. Special mention is also made in the Koran of five idols; namely Wadd, Suwaa, Yagoutha, Yaouka and Nassra. There were common idols among the pagan Arabians. Besides the idols referred to above the Arabs worshipped a great number of others. Almost every housekeeper had his household god. There was a

(1) G. Sale.

famous idol called Hobbal which was supposed by the Arabs to supply them with rain, a very important consideration in their dry land. Therefore it was an object of common worship among them. It had by accident lost a hand which the Quraish repaired with one of gold. A great number of idols were no more than large rude stones, the worship of which was first introduced by the prosperity of *Ishmael*; for when they increased in number and the territory of Mecca grew too narrow for them, large numbers of them emigrated to other localities. It was usual for them on such emigrations to take with them some of the stones of the revered holy land of Mecca, and to set them up in their new abodes and to pay them devotion. But this devotion ended at last in rank idolatry; the *Ishmaelites* forgetting the religion of their fathers so far as to pay divine worship to rude pieces of stone. As to the worship of the stars, the Arabs might be easily led into it from their observing the changes of weather happening at the rising and setting of certain of them which after a long course of experience induced them to ascribe a divine power to those stars, and to think themselves indebted to them for their rain; they used to say that their rain came from such or such a star. The Koran particularly takes notice of this superstition.

Magain religion or fire-worship was introduced by the Persian Zoroastrians through their frequent intercourse with the Arabs.

Judaism was introduced among the idolatrous Arab by the Jews who fled in great numbers into Arabia from the fearful destruction of their country by the Romans. They made proselytes among several tribes and in time became very powerful, and possessed of several towns and fortresses in the Arabian Peninsula. But over a century at least before, the Jewish religion was not unknown to the Arabs. Abu Carb Assad who was king of Yemen about 700 years before Islam, is said to have introduced Judaism among the idolatrous Himyarites. Some of his successors also embraced the same religion, one of whom, Youssuf, surnamed Zul Nowas, was remarkable for his zeal and terrible persecution of all who did not turn Jew, putting them to death by various tortures, the most common of which was throwing them into a glowing pit of fire, whence, he acquired the sinister title of "Lord of the Pit". This persecution is also referred to in the Koran.[1]

(1) Koran chap. 85.

Christianity had likewise made good progress among the Arabs before Islam. The persecution and disorders which darkened the Eastern Church soon after the beginning of the third century, obliged great numbers of Christians to seek shelter in Arabia, that country of liberty. There were for the most part of the Jacobite community, a sect that was widely distributed throughout Egypt, Arabia and Mesopotamia.

The above mentioned were the principal religions that prevailed among the Arabs, though the chief religion was idolatry. Some of the pagan Arabs believed neither in a creation of divine origin nor in a resurrection, attributing the existence of things and their dissolution to nature.

Some believed that when the soul separated itself from the body it took the shape, of a bird, called "Hama" or "Sada". If the deceased person was the victim, of violent death, the bird remained hovering over the grave crying "Iskouni" i.e. "Give me drink, till his death was avenged, and then it flew away. This belief was forbidden by the Koran. Belief in Spirits and Fairies and Oracles rendered by their idols whom they consulted by means of arrows which they called "Azlam". was universal.

Each tribe had its particular idols and particular temples. The hierophants attending these temples received rich offerings from the devotees and often there arose sanguinary conflicts among the worshippers of different temples. But the celebrated temple of the *Kaaba* at Mecca, the Chapel of Abraham and Ishmael was considered sacred by all. The Jews and Sabians sent offerings there. The custody of the Kaaba was the object of great jealousy among the tribes, as it conferred on the custodians the honorable functions and privileges. At the time. of the birth Mohammed the custody of the Kaaba was in the hands of his family the Hashimites

As for the Christian religion at the advent of Mohammed, though it flourished and had a large number of followers among the Arabs, yet its true and pure doctrines were exceedingly and abominably corrupted[1].

(1) Sale, Prelim. Disc

Some of the Christians believed the soul died with the body, and was to be raised again with it on the last day[1]. Others substituted the Virgin Mary for God or worshipped her as such. Those who believed in the divinity of the Virgin Mary were named the Mariamites[2]. This conception is condemned in the Koran.

Reviewing the religious aspect of the Arabs before Islam, Sir William Muir says: "After five centuries of Christian Evangelization, we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christians; the Banu Harith of Najran, the Banu Hanifa of Tamama, some of Banu Tay of Tayma and hardly any more. Judaism, vastly more powerful had exhibited a spasmodic effort of proselytism under Zul Nowas, but as an active and converting agent, the Jewish faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity, the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelitic superstition, setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a thralldom, vigorous and undisputed"[3].

## THEIR CHARACTER AND MANNERS

Arabia during the pre-Islamic days was in a very low state of civilization. Awful superstition and idolatry prevailed everywhere. Gross licentiousness was indulged in. Crimes of infanticide and human sacrifices were common. The various tribes were in constant and perpetual warfare with each other[4]. The absence of any stable government had led to the prevalence of anarchism and criminal excesses. The whole peninsula was in a pitiful state of chaos, sin, impurity and wickedness[5]. The sacred chapel of antiquity erected by their ancestor Abraham and Ishmael for the worship of the One God, the

(1) Eusebius Hist.
(2) Epiphon.
(3) Sir William Muir : The Life of Mohammad, Vol. I, Introduction.
(4) G. Sale.
(5) Abul Feda. Ibn Athir. Sale, Muir & c.

Almighty, was converted into a temple containing over hundred idols representing superstitious gods and goddesses. The great and divine religions which the Prophets of yore had brought down from Heaven had lost their originality, fidelity and purity.

Opposition, persecution and even brutal force were every day's occurrences. It seems that the religion of Islam along with its teachings and morals was revealed at a time, when need for guidance was most felt, as will be dealt with later in this book.

## THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**The accomplishments the Arabs prided themselves on, were:**

1- Eloquence and a perfect skill in their own tongue,
2- Expertness in the use of arms and horsemanship,
3- Hospitality.

The first they exercised themselves in by composing orations and poems. Their orations were of two sorts, metrical and prosaic, the one being compared to pearls strung, and the other to loose ones.

They endeavored to excel in both and whoever was able, in an assembly, to persuade the people to a great enterprise, or dissuade them from a dangerous one or gave them other wholesome advice was honored with the title of "*Khateeb*" or orator. Poetry was held in such great esteem among them that it was a great accomplishment and a proof of ingenious extraction, to be able to express oneself in verse with ease and elegance, on any extraordinary occurrence; even in their common discourse, they made frequent applications to celebrated passages of their famous poets. In their poems were preserved the historical events, the rights of tribes, the memory of great actions and the progress of their language, for which reason an excellent poet reflected so great an honor on his tribe that, as soon as anyone began to be admired for his performances of this kind in a tribe, the other tribes sent publicly to congratulate it on the occasion, and his own tribe made entertainments at which the women assisted dressed in their nuptial ornaments, singing to the sound of tambourines the happiness of their tribe who had now one to protect their honor, to preserve their genealogies and the purity of their

language, and to transmit their actions to posterity; for this was all performed by their poems. Thus they were solely indebted to their poems for knowledge and instructions, moral and economical, and to them they had recourse, as to an oracle, in all doubts and differences. No wonder, then, that a public congratulation was made on this account, which honor they yet were so far from making cheap, that they never did it, except on one of these three occasions which were reckoned great points of felicity, to wit, on the birth of a boy, the rise of a poet and the foal of a she-camel of a generous breed.

To keep up emulation among their poets, the tribes had once a year a general assembly at *Okaaz*, a place famous on that account and where they held a weekly fair. This annual meeting lasted a whole month, during which time they employed themselves not only in trading, but in repeating their poetical compositions, contending and vying with each other for the prize. The poems that were judged to excel, were kept in their king's treasuries and hung on the Kaaba, as were the seven celebrated poems called "Al-Mo'allacat"(1).

As to the exercise of arms and horsemanship the Arabs were in a manner obliged to practice and encourage this by reason of the independence of their tribes, whose frequent quarrels made wars almost continual; and they usually ended their disputes in pitched battle(2).

Hospitality was so habitual to the Arabs, and so much esteemed, that the examples of this virtue among them exceed whatever can be cited among other nations. Nor were the Arabs less addicted to liberality after the coming of their Prophet than their ancestors had been(3). Many remarkable instances of this commendable quality among them can be quoted. Sale in his preliminary discourse, affixed to his Translation of the Koran, has contented himself with reproducing the following occurrence:

Three men were disputing in the Court of the Kaaba, as to which was the most liberal person among the Arabs. One gave the preference to Abdallah, the son of Jaafar, the uncle of the Prophet Mohammed; another

(1) Pocock.
(2) Idem.
(3) Sale. Prelim. Disc.

to Kais Ebn Obadah, and the third gave it to Arabah, of the tribe of Aws. After much debate, one that was present, to end the dispute, proposed that each of them should go to his friend and ask him for assistance, that they might see what each one gave, and form a judgment accordingly. This was agreed to, and Abdallah's champion, going to him, found him with his foot in the stirrup, just mounting his camel for a journey, and thus accosted him: "Son of the uncle of the Apostle of God, I am traveling and in necessity". Upon which, Abdallah Alighted and bade him take the camel, with all that was upon it, but desired him not to part with a sword which happened to be fixed to the saddle, because it had belonged to Aly, the son of Abu-Talib. So he took the camel and found on it some vests of silk and 4000 pieces of gold; but the thing of greatest value was the sword. The second went to Kais Ibn Saad, whose servant told him, that his master was asleep, and desired to know his business. The friend answered that he came to ask Kais' assistance, being in want on the road. Whereupon the servant said that he had rather supply his necessity than wake his master, and gave him a purse of 7000 pieces of gold, assuring him that it was all the money then in the house. He also directed him to go to those who had the charge of the camels with a certain token, and take a camel and a slave and return home with them When Kais awoke and his Servant informed him of what he had done, he gave him his freedom and asked why he did not call him, "For", said he, "I would have given him more". The third man went to Arabah and met him coming out of his house to go to prayers and leaning on two slaves, because his eyesight failed him. The friend no sooner make known his case than Arabah let go the slaves, and, clapping his hands together, loudly lamented his misfortune in having no money, but desired him to take the two slaves which the man refused to do, till Arabah protested, that if he did not accept them, he would give them their freedom and, leaving the slaves, groped his way along by the wall. On the return of the disputants, judgment was unanimously and with great justice given by all who were present, and Arabah was the most generous of the three.

Nor were these the only good qualities of the Arabs, they are commended by ancient historians for being most exact to their word[1], and for being respectful to their seniors, and they have always been

(1) Herodotus.

celebrated for their quickness of apprehension and vivacity of their wit, especially those of the desert[1].

## THE BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE CULTIVATED BY THE ARABS BEFORE ISLAM

The chief branches of knowledge the Arabs cultivated before the rise of Islam, were their history and the genealogical descent of families; such as knowledge of the stars as to be able to foretell the changes of weather; and the interpretation of dreams[2].

They used to pride themselves very much on the nobility of their families, and so many disputes arose in respect of this, that it is in no way surprising that they took great pains in recording the genealogies of their families.

Their knowledge of the stars was procured through long experience and not from regular study of astronomy[3]. The stars or planets, by which they most usually forecast the weather, were called "Al-an'waa" or "the houses of the moon". They are 28 in number and divide the Zodiac into as many parts, through one of which the moon passes every night. As some of them set in the morning, others rise opposite to them, which happens every thirteenth night; and from their rising and setting, the Arabs by long experience observed, what changes happened in the air, and at length came to ascribe to them divine power, saying that their rain came from such or such a star. This expression the Prophet condemned and he absolutely forbade them to use it in the old sense, unless they meant no more by it, than that God has so ordained that, when the moon was in such or such a "house" or at the setting or rising of such a star, it should rain or be windy, or be hot or cold.

The early Arabs, therefore, seem to have made no further progress in astronomy, although they afterwards cultivated this science so

(1) D. Herbelot.
(2)Shahristani.
(3) Abul Farag.

successfully that they were able to observe the influence of stars on the weather, and to give them names; and it was only natural that they should do this, when we consider their pastoral mode of life, spent for the greater part under the open sky[1]. The names they ascribed to the stars, generally were connected with cattle or flocks and they were so nice in distinguishing them, that no language has so many names for stars and heavenly bodies as Arabic, for though they have since borrowed the names of several constellations from the Greeks, yet far greater numbers are of their own finding and much more ancient, particularly those of the more conspicuous stars and those of the lesser constellation which are contained within the greater, and were not observed or named by the Greeks[2].

## THE CITY OF MECCA

Mecca is the chief city of Arabia. It derives its wealth from the prodigious concourse of people who assemble there yearly as pilgrims from all parts of the world where Islam flourishes. Advantage is taken of this to hold a great fair for all kinds of merchandise. The possession of the temple of Kaaba gave Mecca special sanctity and predominance over all the other cities of the peninsula. The soil about Mecca is so barren that it produces nothing but what grows in the desert. Having, therefore, no corn or grain of their own growing, the Meccans are obliged to bring it from other places, and Hashim, Mohammed's great grandfather, the prince of his tribe, in order to secure an adequate supply of provisions for his tribe, appointed two caravans to set, out yearly for that purpose, one in summer and the other in winter.

These caravans of purveyors are referred to in the Koran. Thus, Mecca from the earliest time was the centre, not only of the religious associations of pagan Arabia, but also of its commercial activity.

During the period prior to the birth of Mohammad, the government of Mecca was an Oligarchy composed of the leading members of the house

(1) Sale, Prelim. Disc.
(2) George Sale - Prelim. Disc.

of Kussay, the Prophet's ancestor. The governing body consisted of ten senators who were styled Sheriffs. These decemviri occupied the first place in the state, and their offices were hereditary in favor of the eldest member of each family. Their functions were:

a) The guardianship of the keys of the temple of the Kaaba,

b) The administration of the water supplied by the wells in Mecca and its neighborhood.

c) The civil and criminal magistracy.

d) The control of foreign affairs.

e) The custody of the standard under which the nation marched against its enemies.

f) The administration of the poor-tax derived from the alms of the nation and employed in providing food for the poor pilgrims.

g) The presidency of the national assembly.

h) The guardianship of the council chamber, which office conferred upon its holders the right of convoking the assembly.

i) The administration of the public finances

j) The guardianship of the divining arrows, by which the judgment of the gods and goddesses was obtained. At the same time, it was an established custom that the oldest member exercised the greatest influence, and bore the title of chief and lord par excellence. At the time of the Prophet, his uncle Abbas was the senior member of these Senators[1].

(1) Sayed Amir Aly "The Spirit of Islam".



# Chapter (2)

# THE LIFE OF PROPHET MOHAMMAD

## BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Mohammad, literally, the highly praised, is the chief name of the great Arabian Prophet and founder of the religion of Islam, wrongly called after him Mohammedanism. He was born at Mecca, the chief town of Arabia, in the year 570 A.D. He was the posthumous son of Abdullah who belonged to the family of Hashim, the noblest family of the Quraish section of the Arabian race. His grandfather Abdul Muttalib who was directly descended from Ishmael held the high office of custodian of the Kaaba, the common Pantheon of pagan Arabia, and was virtual head of the Meccan commonwealth.

The birth of Mohammad is stated to have been attended by many remarkable portents[1]. Before the child completed the 6th year of his age, his mother died and the doubly orphaned Mohammad was under the charge of his grandfather Abdul Muttalib who took the most tender care of him. But the old chief died two years afterwards. On his death bed he confided to his son Abu Talib the charge of the little orphan. When Mohammad was twelve years old, he accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a mercantile journey to Syria and they proceeded as far as Basra. The journey lasted for some months, it was at Basra that the Christian monk Bahira met Mohammad and he is related to have said to Abu Talib

(1) Ibn Athir. Ibn Hisham. Etc.

"Return with this boy and guard him against hatred of the Jews, for a great career awaits this, your nephew", After this travel, the youth of Mohammad seems to have been passed uneventfully, but all authorities agree in ascribing to him such correctness of manners and purity of morals, as were rare among the people of Mecca. The fair character and the honorable bearing of the unobtrusive youth won the approbation of the citizens of Mecca, and by common consent he received the title of "*Al Amin*", the faithful[1].

In his early years, Mohammad was not free from the cares of life. He had to watch the flocks of his uncle, who like the rest of the *Hashimites*, had lost the greater part of his riches.

From youth to manhood he led an almost solitary life. The lawlessness, rife among the Meccans, the sudden outbursts of causeless and sanguinary quarrels among the tribes frequenting the fair of *Okaaz* (the Arabian Olympia), the immorality and skepticism of the Quraishites, naturally caused feelings of pity and sorrow in the heart of the sensitive youth. Such were to him scenes of social misery and religious degradation, characteristic of a depraved age.

When Mohammad was 25 years old, he traveled once more to Syria as the factor of a noble and rich *Quraishite* widow named *Khadija*, and having proved himself faithful in the commercial interests of that lady, was soon rewarded with her hand in marriage. This marriage proved fortunate and singularly happy. *Khadija* was much the senior of her husband, but in spite of the disparity of age between them, the tenderest devotion on both sides existed. This marriage gave him the loving heart of a woman who was ever ready to console him in his despair and to keep alive within him the feeble, flickering flame of hope, when no man believed in him - not even himself - and the world appeared gloomy in his eyes[2].

Till he reached the 30th year of his age, Mohammad was almost a stranger to the outside world. Since the death of his grandfather, authority in Mecca was divided among the ten senators who constituted the

(1) Hugh's Dictionary of Islam, pp. 368, 369.
(2) Hugh's Dictionary of Islam.

governing body of the Arabian Commonwealth. There was no such accord among them as to ensure the safety of individual rights and property. Though family relations afforded some degree of protection to citizens, yet strangers were frequently exposed to persecution and oppression. In many cases they were robbed, not only of their goods, but even of their wives and daughters. At the instigation of the faithful Mohammad, an old league, called the Federation of "Fudul" i.e. favors, was revived with the object of repressing lawlessness and defending every weak individual, whether Meccan or stranger, free or slave, against any wrong or oppression, to which he might be the victim, within the territories of Mecca.

When Mohammad reached the 35th year of his age, he settled by his judgment a grave dispute which almost threatened to plunge the whole of Arabia into a fresh series of her wars. In rebuilding the sacred temple of the Kaaba, in 605 A.D., the question arose as to who should have the honor of raising the black stone, the most holy relic of that temple into its proper place. Each tribe claimed that honor. The senior citizen advised the disputants to accept for their umpire in this difficulty the man who would be the first to enter from a certain gate. The proposal was agreed upon, and the first man who entered the gate, was Mohammad, "The Ameen". Mohammad gave them an advice which served to satisfy all the contending parties. He ordered the stone to be placed on a piece of cloth and each tribe to share the honor of lifting it up, by taking hold of a part of the cloth. The stone was thus deposited in its place, and the rebuilding of the temple was completed without further interruption(1). It is related that, about this period a certain Osman, son of Howairith, supported by Byzantine, made an attempt to convert the territory of Hidjaz in to a Roman dependency, but the attempt failed, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mohammad(2).

These are nearly all the public acts related by historians in which Mohammad had taken part within the 15 years after his marriage with Khadija. As for his private life he is described to have been even helpful to the needy and the helpless. His uncle Abu Talib

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(1) George Sale.
(2) Ibid.

had fallen into distress through his endeavors to maintain the old position of his family, and Mohammad, being rather rich at this time by his alliance with Khadija, tried to discharge part of the debt of gratitude and obligation which he owed to his uncle, by undertaking the bringing up and education of his son Aly; and a year later he adopted Akil, another of his uncle's sons. Khadija had born Mohammad three sons and four daughters, all the males died in childhood, but in loving Aly he found much consolation.

About this time Mohammad set a good example of humanity which created a salutary effect upon his people. His wife Khadija, to gratify her husband, made him a present of a young slave, named "Zaid" son of Haritha, who had been brought as a capture to Mecca and sold to Khadija. When Haritha heard that Mohammad possessed Zaid, he came to Mecca and offered a large sum for his ransom. Whereupon Mohammad said: "Let Zaid come hither, and if he chooses to go with you", addressing the boy's father, "take him without ransom, but if it be his choice to stay with me, why should I not keep him? And Zaid, being brought into Mohammad's presence, declared that he would stay with his master who treated him as if he were his only son. Mohammad no sooner heard this, then he took Zaid by the hand and led him to the black stone of Kaaba where he publicly adopted him as his son to which the father acquiesced and then returned home well satisfied. Henceforward Zaid was called the son of Mohammad[1].

Mohammad was now approaching his 40th year and his mind was ever engaged in profound contemplation and reflection "Before him lay his country, bleeding and torn by fratricidal wars and intolerable dissensions; his people, sunk in barbarism, addicted to the observation of rites and superstitions, were, with all their desert virtues, lawless and cruel. His two visits to Syria had opened to him a scene of unutterable moral and social desolation, rival creeds and sects tearing each other to pieces, wrangling over the body of the God they pretended to worship carrying their hatred to the valleys and deserts of Hidjaz and rending the townships of Arabia with their quarrels and bitterness"[2].

(1) Sale.
(2) Sayed Amir Aly.

## THE BEGINNING OF MOHAMMEDAN REVELATION

Sir William Muir, in his "Life of Mohammed" remarks; "The idolatry and moral debasement of his people, pressed heavily upon him and the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity excited doubts without satisfying them; and his mind was perplexed with uncertainty as to what was the true religion."

Mohammad had been wont, for years after his marriage, to seclude himself in a cave in Mount Hira, a few miles from Mecca. To this cave he used to betake himself for prayer and meditation, sometimes alone and at others with his family. There he often spent whole nights in deep thought and profound communion with the unseen yet, yet all-pervading God of the Universe. It was during one of those retirements and in the still hours of the night, when no human sympathy was near, that Mohammad believed an angel came to him, to tell him that he was the Apostle of God sent to reclaim a fallen people to the knowledge and service of their God.

Renowned compilers of authentic traditions of Islam agree in the following account of the first revelations received by the prophet.

It was in true dreams that Mohammad received the first revelations. "He never dreamt, but it came to pass as the dawn of the day"(1). After this, Mohammad continued to seclude the cave of Mount Hira and to worship there day and night. He would whenever he wished, return to his family at Mecca and then go back again, taking with him the necessaries of life. Thus he continued to return to Khadija, from time to time, until one day the revelation came down to him and the angel appeared to him and said: "Read"; but as Mohammad was an illiterate man, having never received any instruction in reading or writing he said to the Angel: "I am not a reader". The Angel took hold of him and squeezed him as much as he could bear, and then Said again: "Read"; and the Prophet said: "I am not a reader". Then the Angel again seized the Prophet and squeezed him for the third time and said: "Read, in the name of the Lord, who created; created man of congealed blood. Read thou. For thy Lord is the most Beneficent, who hath taught the use of the pen, who hath taught man that

(1) Mishkatul Masabeeh; Sir Hughes "Dictionary of Islam".

which he knoweth not"[1]. Then the Prophet repeated the words with a trembling heart. And he returned to Khadija from (Mount Hira) and said: "Wrap me up, wrap me up". And he was wrapped up in a garment until his fear was dispelled. And he told Khadija what had occurred, and that he was becoming either a soothsayer or one smitten with madness. She replied: "God forbid! He will surely not let such a thing to happen. For you speak the truth, you are faithful in trust, you bear the affections of the people, you spend in good works what you gain in trade, you are hospitable and you assist your fellowmen; have you seen aught terrible?" Mohammad replied: "Yes". And he told her what he had seen. Whereupon, Khadija said:

*"Rejoice, O dear husband and be cheerful. He, in whose hands stands Khadija's life, bears witness to the truth of this fact, that thou wilt be the prophet to this people";*

Then she arose and went to her cousin Waraqa son of Noufal, who was old and blind and who knew the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, and is stated to have translated them into Arabic. When she told him of what she had heard, he cried out:

*"Holy! Holy! Verily, this is the 'Namus' (the Holy Spirit) who came to Moses. He will be the prophet of his people. Tell him this and bid him be of brave heart".*

And when the two men met subsequently in the street, the blind old student of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures spoke of his faith and trust.

*"I swear by Him, in Whose hand Waraqa's life is"*, said the old man, *"God has chosen thee to be the prophet of this people. They will call thee a liar, they will persecute thee, they will banish thee, they will fight against thee. Oh, that I could live to those days. I would fight for thee"*. And he kissed him on his forehead[2].

(1) Koran 96:1-4.
(2) Ibn Hisham, Ibn Al-Athir Mishkat-ul-Masabeeh.

The first vision was followed by a considerable period, during which Mohammad suffered much mental depression. During this period, the commentators state, the Prophet was seized with so much melancholy that he wished to throw himself when the Angel of God recalled him to his duty to mankind. The Angel spoke to the grieved heart of hope and trust, of the bright future, when he should see the people of the earth crowding into the one true faith. His destiny was unfolded to him when, wrapped in profound meditation, melancholy and sadness, he felt himself called by a voice from heaven to arise and preach. "O thou art wrapped in thy mantle, rise and warn and glorify the Lord"(1). And he arose and engaged himself in the work to which he was called. Khadija was the first to accept his mission. She was to believe in the revelation, to abandon the idolatry of her people and to join him in purity of heart and in offering up prayers to the Almighty God.

## MOHAMMAD'S MISSION

At the beginning of his mission, Mohammad, hereinafter called the Prophet, opened his soul only to those attached to him and tried to free them from the gross practices of their forefathers. After Khadija, Aly his cousin, was the next disciple. The Prophet used often to go into the desert around Mecca with his wife and young cousin, that they might together offer their heart felt thanks to the God of all nations for His manifold blessings. Once they were surprised by Abu Talib, the father of Aly. And he said to the Prophet "O son of my brother, what is this religion thou art following?" "It is the religion of God, of His Angels, of His Apostles and our ancestor Abraham," answered the Prophet "God has sent me to His servants, to direct them towards the truth and thou, O my uncle, art the most worthy of all. It is meet that I should thus call upon thee and it is meet that thou should accept the truth and help in spreading it". "Son of my brother", replied Abu Talib, "I cannot abjure the religion of my fathers; but by the Supreme God, whilst I am live, none shall dare to injure thee". Then turning towards Aly, his son, the venerable chief asked what religion was his. "O father", answered Aly, "I believe in God and His Prophet and go with him". "Well my son" said Abu Talib, "He will

(1) Koran: 74:1-3.

not call thee to aught, save what is good, wherefore thou art free to cling to him".

After Aly, Zaid, Mohammad's adopted son, became a convert to the new faith. He was followed by Abu Bakr, a leading member of the Quraish tribe and an honest wealthy merchant who enjoyed great consideration among his compatriots. He was but two years younger than the Prophet. His adoption of the new faith was of great moral effect. Soon after, five notables presented themselves before the Prophet and accepted Islam. Several proselytes also came from lower classes of the Arabs to adopt the new religion. For three, weary long years, the Prophet labored very quietly to deliver his people from the worship of idols. Polytheism was deeply rooted among the people. It offered attractions which the new faith in its purity did not possess. The Quraishites had personal material interests in the old worship; and their prestige was dependent upon its maintenance; the Prophet had to contend with the idolatrous worship of its followers and to oppose the ruling oligarchy which governed its destinies.

After three years of constant but quiet struggle, only thirty followers were secured. An important change now occurred in the relations of the Prophet with the citizens of Mecca. His compatriots had begun to doubt his sanity, thought him crazy or possessed by an evil spirit. Hitherto he had preached quietly and unobtrusively. He was now determined to appeal publicly to the Meccans to abandon their idolatry. For this he arranged a gathering on a neighboring hill, and there spoke to them of their folly in the sight of God, in offering worship to pieces of stone which they called their gods. He invited them to abandon their old impious worship and adopt the faith of love and truth and purity. He warned them of the fate that had overtaken in the past, races who had not heeded the preaching of former prophets. But the gathering had departed without listening to the warning given to them by the Prophet. Having thus failed to induce his fellow citizens to listen to him, he turned his attention to the strangers arriving at the city on commerce or pilgrimage. But the Quraishites made attempts to frustrate his efforts. They hastened themselves to first meet the strangers on the different routes, to warn them against holding any communication with the Prophet whom they represented as a dangerous magician. When the pilgrims or traders

returned to their homes, they carried with them the news of the advent of the bold preacher who was inviting the Arabians loudly- at the risk of his own life - to abandon the worship of their dear idols. Now the Prophet and his followers became subject to some persecution and indignity. The hostile Quraishites prevented the Prophet from offering his prayers at the sacred temple of the Kaaba; they pursued him wherever he went; they covered him and his disciples with dirt and filth, when engaged in their devotions. They scattered thorns in the places which he frequented for devotion and meditation. Amidst all these trials the Prophet did not waver, he was full of confidence in his mission. On several occasions he was put in imminent danger of losing his life(1). At this time Hamza, the youngest son of Abdul Muttalib adopted Islam. Hamza was a man of distinguished bravery, an intrepid warrior, generous and true, whose heroism earned for him the title of the "Lion of God". He became a devoted adherent of Islam and eventually laid down his life in the cause.

The Prophet continued his preaching to the Arabs in a most gentle and reasonable manner. He called the nation, so accustomed to iniquity and wrong doings, to abandon their abominations. In burning words which excited the hearts of his hearers, he warned them of the punishment which God had inflicted upon the ancient tribes of Aad and Thamud(2) who obstinately disobeyed the teachings of his messengers to them. He adjured them by the wonderful sights of nature, by the noon day brightness, by the night when it spreads her veil, by the day when it appears in glory, to listen to his warning before a similar destruction befell them. He spoke to them of the day of reckoning, when their deeds in world shall be weighed before the Eternal Judge, when the children who had been buried alive shall be asked, for what crime they were put to death(3).

As the number of believers increased and the cause of the prophet was strengthened by the conversions of many powerful citizens, the Prophet's preaching aroused a serious revolutionary movement. He condemned the idols the Arabs worshipped and taught the unity of God.

(1) Sir William Muir's Life of Mohammed.

(2) Vide Book I.

(3) It was the custom of heathen Arabs to bury their children alive from fear of want. This custom was forbidden by the Koran . 17:31.

The Quraishites were now alarmed. Their Power and prestige were at stake. They were the custodians of idols which the Prophet had threatened to destroy; they were the ministers of the worship which he denounced; in fact their existence and living wholly depended upon the maintenance of the old institutions. Again the tone of the Prophet in his teachings was intensely democratic. He taught that in the sight of his Lord beings were equal, the only distinction, recognized among them being the weight of their piety(1). The Quraishites would have none of this leveling or distinctions, as it reflected upon their long inherited privileges. Accordingly they organized a system of persecution in order to suppress the movement before it became firmly established. They decided that each family should take upon itself the task of stamping out the new faith on the spot. Each household tortured its own members or adherents or slaves who were supposed to have connected themselves with the new religion. With the exception of the Prophet who was protected by Abu Talib and his kinsmen, Abu Bakr and a few others who were either distinguished by their rank or possessed some influence among the Quraishites, all other proselytes were subjected to different sorts of torture. Some of them were thrown into prison, starved and then flogged. The hill of Ramada and the place called Bata became thus scenes of cruel torture(2).

One day the Quraishites sought to approach the Prophet to induce him to discontinue his teachings of the new religion which had sown discord among their people. Otba, son of Rabia; was delegated to see the Prophet and speak to him. 'O son of my brother', said Otba on meeting the Prophet, 'You are distinguished by your qualities; yet you have sown discord among our people and cast dissension in our families; you denounced our gods and goddesses and you charge our ancestors with impiety. Now we are come to make a proposition to you and ask you to think well before you reject it. 'I am listening to you, O father of Walid', said the Prophet. 'O son of my brother', began Otba, 'If by this affair you intend to acquire riches, honors and dignity, we are willing to collect for you a fortune larger than is possessed by any one of us; we shall make you our chief and will do naught without you, if you desire dominion we

(1) Koran : 49:13.

(2) Sir William Muir.

shall make you our king, and if the demon which possesses you cannot be subdued, we will bring you doctors and give them riches till they cure you'. When Otba had finished his discourse, the Prophet said; 'Now listen to me O father of Walid'. 'I listen', he replied. The Prophet recited to him the first eight verses of chapter 41 of the Koran which may be interpreted as follows:

> *"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful; Here Is a revelation from the Merciful, a book, the verses whereof are explained; an Arabic Koran, for the instruction of a People who understand, it is a herald of good tidings and a warner, but most of those Who heard it, turn aside, so that they hear not, and they say (to the Prophet); our hearts are veiled from the doctrine, to which thou invites us; and there is a heaviness in our ears and a curtain hangs between us and thee; wherefore act thou as thou shalt think fit, for we shall act according to our own sentiments. Say verily I am only a mortal like you. It is revealed unto me, that your God is One God; therefore take the right way to Him, and ask His forgiveness and woe be to the idolaters who give not the appointed alms and believe not in the life to come*[1]*. But as to those who believe and do good, they shall receive an everlasting reward*[2]*"*

When the Prophet had finished his recitation he said to Otba; "This may reply to your proposition; now take what course you find best"[3].

Persecution by the Quraishites grew fiercer and fiercer every day and the sufferings of the Prophet's disciples became unbearable. He had heard of the righteousness, tolerance and hospitality of the neighboring Christian king of Abyssinia. He recommended such of his disciples who were without protection, to seek refuge in the kingdom of that pious king, Al Nagashi (Negus). Some of the unprotected adherents of Islam, to the number of 15, promptly availed themselves of the advice and sailed to Abyssinia. Here they met with a very kind reception from the Negus.

(1) The Arabs used to regard hospitality as a virtue, but alms-giving was considered a weakness among them. A future life was generally considered a mere fable.

(2) Koran : Chapter 41: 1 – 8.

(3) Ibn Hisham.

This is called the first flight in the history of Islam and occurred in the 5th year of the Prophet Mohammad's mission (615 A.D.). These emigrants were soon followed by many more of their fellow-sufferers until the number reached eighty three men and eighteen women[1].

The hostile Quraishites, furious at the escape of their victims, sent deputies to the king of Abyssinia to request him to deliver up the refugees, that they might be put to death, as they had abjured their old religion and embraced a new one. The king summoned the poor fugitives and enquired of them what was the religion which they had adopted, in preference to their old faith. Jaafar, son of Abu Talib and Brother of Aly, acted as spokesman for the exiles. He spoke thus:

> *"O king, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism, we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity and sense of duty towards our neighbors, and we knew no law, but that of the strong, when God raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware, and he called us to profess the unity of God and taught us to associate nothing with him; he forbade us the worship of idols and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of neighborhood; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from vice and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to give alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God alone and to associate naught with him. Hence our people have persecuted us, trying to make us to forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us until, finding no safety among them, we have come to your kingdom; trusting you will give us protection against their persecution*[2].

After hearing the above speech, the hospitable king ordered the

(1) G. Sale.
(2) Ibn Hisham, Al Tabari, Ibn el Athir.

deputies to return to their people in safety and not to interfere with their fugitives. Thus the emigrants passed the period of exile in peace and comfort. Whilst the followers of the Prophet sought safety in foreign lands against the persecution of their people, he continued his warnings to the Quraishites more strenuously than ever. Again they came to him with offers of riches and honor which he firmly and utterly refused. "*I am neither*" said the Prophet, "*desirous of riches nor ambitious of dignity or dominion. I am a messenger of God to give you good tidings and to admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favorable to you, both in this world and in the next; if you reject my admonitions, I shall be patient and will let God judge between us!*" But they mocked him and urged him for miracles to prove his mission. He used to answer "*God has not sent me to work wonders, he has sent me to preach to you*" Thus disclaiming all power of wonder-working the Prophet ever rested the truth of his divine mission upon his wise teachings. He addressed himself to the inner consciousness of man, to his common sense and to his own better judgment. "Listen", he used to address them; "*I bring you, a revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful God: a book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Koran for a people who understand: a herald of good news and a warner; but most of you turn aside, so you hear not*"(1). On other occasions he used to address the polytheists thus: "*I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your Deity is one; therefore worship Him alone and ask His forgiveness; and woe to those who associate false deities with the True God...*"

Despite all the exhortations of the Prophet, the Quraishites persisted in asking him for a sign. They insisted that unless some sign be sent down to him from his Lord, they would not believe. "Why", the infidels used to ask, "had not Mohammad been sent with miracles, like previous prophets?" "Because", replied the Prophet, "miracle had proved inadequate to convince. Noah had been sent with signs, and with what effect? Where was the lost tribe of Thamud? They had refused to receive the preaching of the Prophet Saleh unless he showed them a sign and caused the rock to bring forth a living camel. He did what they asked. In scorn they had cut the camel's feet and then daring the prophet to fulfill his threats of judgment, were found dead in their beds next morning, stricken by the angel of the Lord. There are some seventeen places in the

(1) Koran: 41: 1-4.

Koran, in which the Arabian Prophet is challenged to work a sign, and he answers them all to the same or similar effect: "God has the power of working miracles and had not been believed; he who could not know even himself adequately, could not know what God had hidden; that there were greater miracles in nature than any which could be wrought outside of it; that the Koran itself was a great, everlasting miracle". The Koran, the Prophet used to assert to the infidels, is a book whose blessings shall be intercepted, a warning for the whole world; it is a collection of all that is best in any other religion and all that is best in sacred books; it is a complete guidance and explains everything necessary; it is a reminder of what is imprinted on human nature and is free from every discrepancy and from error and falsehood. It is a book of true guidance and light to all. Again when the Prophet was urged for a sign, he used to address the idolaters thus;

> "O *men, you are they who stand in need of Allah, and Allah is He who is Self-sufficient, the Praised One; if He pleases, He will take you off and bring a new generation. And this is not difficult for Him to do. A burdened soul cannot bear the burden of another'*[1].

In another instance the Prophet used to appeal to the unbelievers' sense of judgment by reciting to them other passages of the Word of God.

> *'Surely Allah is the Knower of what is unseen in the heavens and the earth; surely He is Cognizant of what is in all hearts. He, it is who made you free creatures of the earth, therefore who-ever disbelieves will bear the risk of his unbelief'. 'Those who remain unbelievers will gain nothing by their obstinacy, except the hatred of their Lord. Have you considered your false deities whom you worship beside God? Show me what thing on earth they have created; or have they any share in the heaven? Surely I am sent to you with truth, to bear you good news and give you warning; and there is not a people, but a warner from God was sent to them. If you give the lie to my message, it is no wonder that you do so; other nations before you have also given the lie to their respective*

(1) Koran: 35: 15-18.

*apostles, though they brought them clear arguments, scripture and illuminating books*[1].

*"As to Allah, the True God, know ye that it is He Who made for you the night, that you may rest therein, and the day to see; most surely Allah is Gracious to men but most men are ungrateful. Allah, your Lord is the Creator of every thing; there is no Deity but He; why are you then turned away? Allah is He Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven and horizon, and He formed you, then made goodly your forms, and He furnished you with wholesome provisions; that is Allah, your Lord; blessed then is Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. I am forbidden to worship those idols whom you adore besides God, because clear arguments have come to me from my Lord, and I am commanded to submit to Him alone, the Lord of the Universe. He it is Who created you from dust, then from a minute life germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child, then He causes you to attain maturity, and some of You may get old and some are caused to die young so that all of you will reach a pre-appointed age. Do you now understand? Allah is He Who gives life and brings death, so when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, be and it is'.*[2]

## THE ARABS SACRED IDOLS

As to the sacred idols, so much honored and esteemed by the pagan Arabs, the Prophet openly declared that 'they are naught but empty names which you (the idolaters) and your fathers have invented'.

From beginning to end the Prophet in all his recitations of the Koran never spoke respectfully of the invented gods or goddesses adopted by the heathen Arabs. There is nothing in all the trustworthy sources of Islam to confirm the allegations made by Western biographers to the contrary.

(1) Koran: 35: 38-40.
(2) Koran: 40: 61-68.

When the Prophet thus spoke reproachfully of the sacred gods of the Quraishites, the latter redoubled their persecution. But the Prophet, nevertheless, continued his preaching undaunted by the hostility of his enemies, or by their bitter persecution of him. And despite all opposition and increased persecution the new faith gained ground. The national fair at Okaz near Mecca attracted many a wild Arab of the desert and many a trading citizen from distant towns. These listened to the teachings of the Prophet, to his admonitions and to his denunciations of their sacred idols and of their superstitions. They carried back all that they had heard to their distant homes and thus the advent of the Arabian Prophet was made known to almost all parts of the Peninsula.

The Meccans, however, were more than ever furious at the Prophet's increasing preaching against their religion. They asked his uncle Abu Talib, to stop him but Abu Talib could not do anything except that he re-assured them. At length, as the Prophet persisted in his ardent denunciations against their ungodliness and impiety, they turned him from the Kaaba where he latterly used to sit to preach, and subsequently went in a body to Abu Talib. They urged the old venerable chief to prevent his nephew from abusing their gods any longer or uttering any ill words against their ancestors. They warned Abu Talib that if he would not do that he would be excluded from the communion of his people and driven to side with Mohammad, and the matter would be settled by fight, until one of the two parties were exterminated[1]. Abu Talib neither wished to separate himself from his people, nor forsake his nephew, for the idolaters to revenge themselves upon. He spoke to the Prophet very softly and begged on to abandon his affair. To this suggestion the Prophet firmly replied:

> *'O my uncle, if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, to cause me to renounce my task, verily I would not desist therefrom, until God made manifest his cause, or I perished in the attempt".*[2]

The Prophet, overcome by the thought that his uncle and protector was willing to desert him, turned to depart. But Abu Talib called him

(1) Abul Fida; Ibn Athir.
(2) Sale, W. Muir, Abul Fida etc.

loudly to come back, and he came. 'Say whatever thou pleasest; for by the Lord I shall not desert thee, nay, never'. The Quraishites again attempted in vain to cause Abu Talib to abandon his nephew. The venerable chief declared his intention to protect his nephew against any menace or violence. He appealed to the sense of honor of the two families of the sons of Hashim and the sons of Muttalib, both families being kinsmen of the Prophet, to protect their member from falling a victim to the hatred of rival parties. All the members of the two families nobly responded to the appeal of Abu Talib, except Abu Lahab, one of the Prophet's uncles, who took part with the persecutors.

At this period, Omar, son of Khattab, adopted Islam. In him the new faith gained a valuable adherent and an important factor in the future development and propagation of Islam.

Hitherto he had been a violent opposer of the Prophet and a bitter enemy of Islam. His conversion is said to have been worked by the magic effect on his mind of a chapter of the Koran which his sister was reading in her house, where he had gone with the intention of killing her on account of her adoption of Islam[1]. Thus the party of the Prophet had been strengthened by the conversion of his uncle, Hamza a man of great valor and merit, and of Abu Bakr and Omar, both men of great energy and reputation. The Muslims now ventured to perform their devotions in public.

Alarmed at the bold part which the Prophet and his followers were now able to assume, and roused by the return of the deputies from Abyssinia and the announcement of their unsuccessful mission, the Quraishites determined to check by a decisive blow any further progress of Islam. Towards this end, in the seventh year of the mission, they made a solemn league or covenant against the descendants of Hashim and Muttalib, engaging themselves to contract no marriage with any of them, and to have no communication with them. Upon this, the Quraishites became divided into two factions, and the two families of Hashim and Muttalib all repaired to Abu Talib as their chief; except only Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, who, out of his inveterate hatred against his nephew and his doctrine went over to the opposite party whose chief was Abu

(1) Ibn Hisham, Sir W. Muir.

Sofian Ibn Harb, of the family of Omayya. The persecuted party, Muslims as well as idolaters, betook themselves to a defile on the eastern skirts of Mecca. They lived in this defensive position for three years. The provisions which they had carried with them were soon exhausted. Probably they would have entirely perished but for the sympathy and occasional help they received from less bigoted compatriots.

Towards the beginning of the tenth year of the mission a reconciliation was concluded between the Quraishites and the two families of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib through the intermediation of Hisham, son of Omar, and Zobeir, son of Abu Omayya Thus, the alliance against the two families was abolished, and they were able to return to Mecca.

During the period the Prophet and his kinspeople passed in their defensive position, Islam made no progress outside; but in the sacred months, when violence was considered sacrilege the Prophet used to come out of his temporary prison to preach Islam to the pilgrims. In the following year, both Abu Talib and Khadija died. Thus the Prophet lost in Abu Talib the kind guardian of his youth who had hitherto protected him against his enemies; and in Khadija his most encouraging companion. She was ever his angel of hope and consolation. The Prophet weighed down by the loss of his amiable protector and his beloved wife without hope of turning the Quraishites from idolatry, with a saddened heart, yet full of trust, resolved to exercise his ministry in some other field, and he chose Tayef, a town about sixty miles east of Mecca, whither he went accompanied by his faithful servant Zaid. The tribe of Thakif, who where the inhabitants of Tayef, received Mohammad very coldly. However, he stayed there for one month. Though the more considerate and better sort of men treated him with a little respect, the slaves and common people refused to listen to his teachings; they were outrageously indignant at his invitation to abandon the gods they worshipped with such freedom of morals and lightness of heart; at length they rose against him, and bringing him to the wall of the city, obliged him to depart and return to Mecca.

The repulse greatly discouraged his followers, however; the Prophet was not wanting to himself, but boldly continued to preach to the public

assemblies at the pilgrimage[1], and gained several new proselytes, among whom were six of the city of Yathrib, of the Jewish tribe of Khazraj. When these Yathribites returned home, they spread the news among their people, that a prophet had arisen among the Arabs who was to call them to God, and put an end to their iniquities.

It was in the twelfth year of his mission that the prophet gave out that he had made his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to Heaven. All that Muslims must believe respecting this journey is that the Prophet saw himself, in a vision, transported from Mecca to Jerusalem, and that in such vision he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord. However, some trustworthy traditionsists maintain that this journey known in history as Miraj (Ascension), was a real bodily one and not only a vision[2].

An eminent writer, commenting on the Ascension remarks: "It may, I think, be fairly asked, why Christians who believe in the bodily resurrection and bodily ascension Jesus and of Elijah, should look upon those Muslims who believe in the bodily Ascension of Mohammad as less rational than themselves?".

In this year twelve men of Yathrib, of whom ten were of the Jewish tribe of Khazraj and the other two of Aws, came to Mecca, and took an oath of fidelity to the Prophet at Akaba, a hill to the north of that city. This oath was called the women's' oath; not that any women were present at this time, but because a man was not thereby obliged to take up arms in defense of the Prophet or his religion; it being the same oath that was afterwards exacted of the women. This oath was as follows:

> *"We will not associate anything with God; we will not steal nor commit adultery or fornication, nor kill our children (as the pagan Arabs used to do when they apprehended that they would not be able to maintain them), nor forge calumnies; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is reasonable, and we will be faithful to him in weal and sorrow".*

(1) Sir W. Muir.

(2) Ibn Hisham; Al Tabari; Ibn Athir etc.

When they had solemnly engaged to do all this, the Prophet sent one of his disciples, Mossaab Ibn Umair, home with them, to teach them the fundamental doctrines and ceremonies of the religion, Mossaab, having arrived at Yathrib, by the assistance of those who had been formerly converted, gained several proselytes, particularly Osaid Ibn Hodeira, a chief man of the city, and Saad Ibn Moaz, prince of the tribe of Aws; Islam was spreading so fast, that there was scarce a house wherein there were not some who had embraced it.

The next year, being the thirteenth of the mission (622 A. D.), Mossaab returned from Yathrib, accompanied, by seventy three men and two women of that city, who had adopted Islam, besides others who were as yet unbelievers. On their arrival these Yathribites immediately sent to the Prophet and invited him to their city. The Prophet was now in great need of such assistance, for his opponents had by this time grown so powerful in Mecca, that he could not stay there much longer without imminent danger. He, therefore accepted their proposal, and met them one night by appointment at Al Akaba, mentioned before, attended by his uncle Al Abbas, who, though he was not then a convert, wished his nephew well. Al Abbas made a speech to those of Yathrib wherein he told them that, as the Prophet Mohammad was obliged to quit his native city and seek shelter elsewhere, and they had offered him their protection, they would do well not to deceive him; and that if they were not firmly resolved to defend and not to betray him, they had better declare their minds, and let him provide for his safety in some other manner. Upon their professing their sincerity, the Prophet swore to be faithful to them, on condition that they should worship none but God, observe the precepts of Islam, obey the Prophet in all that was right and protect him against all insults as heartily as they would their wives and families. They then asked him what would be their return, if they should happen to be killed in the cause of God; he answered: "Paradise" Whereupon they pledged their faith to him and his cause. The Prophet then selected twelve men out of their number to act as his delegates. Thus was concluded the second covenant of Al Akaba. The Yathribites returned home, leaving the Prophet to arrange for his journey to their city. The Prophet directed his followers to seek immediate safety at Yathrib; which they accordingly did. About one hundred families silently disappeared from Mecca and proceeded to

Yathrib, where they were received with enthusiasm and much hospitality. All the disciples had gone to Yathrib. The Prophet alone remained at Mecca, keeping with him only his young cousin Aly, and his devoted friend, old Abu Bakr.

The Meccans, fearing the consequence of this new alliance, began to think seriously of preventing Mohammad from escaping to Yathrib. They met in all haste at the town-hall. After several milder expedients had been rejected, they decided, that he should be killed. They agreed that one man should be chosen out of every tribe for the execution of this design, and that each man should strike a blow at him with his sword, so that responsibility of the guilt might rest equally on all tribes, to whose united power the Hashimites, Mohammad's own tribe, were much inferior and therefore would not be able to revenge their kinsman's death. A number of noble youths were selected for the sanguinary deed. As the night advanced, the assassins posted themselves round the Prophet's dwelling. They watched all night long, waiting to murder Mohammad when he should leave his house at the early dawn. By some means[1] the Prophet had been warned of the danger. In order to keep the attention of the assassins fixed upon the bed which they had been watching through a hole in the door, the Prophet, directed Aly to lie down in his place and wrap himself up in his green cloak; which he did whereas the Prophet miraculously escaped through the window. He repaired to the house of Abu Bakr unperceived by the conspirators who had already assembled at the Prophet's door. These, in the meantime, looking through the crevice, and seeing Aly whom they mistook for Mohammad himself, asleep continued watching there till morning, when Aly arose, and they found themselves deceived. The fury of the Quraishites was now unbounded. The news that the would-be assassins had returned unsuccessful, and that 'Mohammad' had escaped aroused their whole energy. A price of a hundred camels was set upon Mohammad's head.

From Abu Bakr's house the Prophet and he went to a cave in Mount Thor, to the south east of Mecca, accompanied only by Abu Bakr's servant, and an idolater whom they had hired for a guide. In this cave they lay hid for three days to avoid the search of their enemies whom

(1) It is believed that it was by inspiration that Mohammad was so warned, vide Ibn Hisham, Al Wakidi, etc.

they very narrowly escaped. It is related that after the Prophet and his companions entered, two pigeons laid their eggs at the entrance, and a spider covered the mouth of the cave with its web which made the enemies look no further[1]. Abu Bakr, seeing the Prophet in such imminent danger; became very sorrowful, whereupon, the Prophet comforted him with these words recorded in the Koran: "Be not grieved, for God is with us". Their persecutors having retired, they left the cave and set out for Yathrib by a by-road. Having miraculously escaped some horsemen who were sent to pursue them, the fugitives continued their journey without molestation, after three days' journey they reached the territories of Yathrib. Here they were joined by Aly who had been severely maltreated by the idolaters after their disappointment at Mohammad's escape. The Prophet and his companions then proceeded to Yathrib, attended by a great number of his disciples who met them at *Keba'*. They entered the city on the morning of a Friday the 16th Rabi I (corresponding to the 2nd day of July 622).

Thus was accomplished the Hijrah, or the flight of Mohammad as called in European annals, from which the Islamic calendar dates.

## THE PROPHET AT MEDINA

When the Prophet Mohammad and his companions settled at Yathrib, this city changed its name, and henceforth was called. *AlMedina Al Munawara*, the illuminated city, or more shortly *Medina*, the city. It is situated about eleven day's journey to the north of Mecca. At that time it was ruled by two Kahtanite tribes, namely *Aws* and *Khazraj*. These two tribes however, were constantly quarrelling among themselves. It was only about the time when the Prophet announced his mission at Mecca that these tribes, after long years of continuous warfare, entered on a period of comparative peace. When the Prophet settled at Medina the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, forgetting entirely their old feuds were united together in the bond of Islam. Their old divisions were soon effected, and the 'Ansar', the helpers of the Prophet, became the common designation of all Medinites who had helped the Prophet in

(1) Al Wakidi, Ibn Hisham, etc

his cause. Those who emigrated with him from Mecca received the title of 'Muhajereen' or 'the emigrants'. The Prophet in order to unite both classes in closer bonds, established between them a brotherhood which linked them together as children of the same parents, with the Prophet as their guardian.

The first step the Prophet took, after his settlement at Medina, was to build a mosque for the worship of God, according to principles of Islam. Also houses for the accommodation of the emigrants were soon erected.

Medina and its suburbs being at this time inhabited by three distinct parties the Emigrants, the Helpers and the Jews, the Prophet in order to weld them together into an orderly federation, granted a charter to the people clearly defining their rights and obligations. This charter represented the framework of the first Commonwealth organized by the Prophet, and dwelt chiefly on freedom of conscience. It started thus:

> *"In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God, this charter is given by Mohammad, the Apostle of God to all believers, whether of Quraish or Medina, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, who shall all constitute one nation."*

The following are some extracts from the Charter:

> *"The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; no one among them shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against the enemies of his coreligionists. The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our Own people, to our assistance and good offices, the Jews of the various branches, and all others domiciled in Medina shall form with the Muslims one composite nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims. The allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Medina against all enemies. The interior of Medina shall be a sacred place for all who accept this charter. All true Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime,*

*injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the culpable though he be his nearest kin*[1]".

After dealing with the interior management of the State, the charter concluded as follows:

"*All future disputes arising among those who accept this charter, shall be referred, under God, to the Prophet*[2]"

Thus this charter put an end to the state of anarchy that prevailed among the Arabs. It constituted the Prophet Mohammad as chief magistrate of the nation.

The party of the Ansars or helpers, included some lukewarm converts who retained an ill-concealed predilection for idolatry. These were headed by Abdullah Ibn Obāy, a man with some claims to distinction. They ostensibly joined Islam, but in secret were disaffected. They often were a source of considerable danger to the new-born commonwealth and required unceasing watchfulness on the part of the Prophet. Towards them he always showed the greatest patience and forbearance hoping in the end to win them over to the faith, which expectation were fully justified by the result. With the death of Abdulla Ibn Obay, his party which was known as the party of the "Munafiquin" (the hypocrites) disappeared.

The Jews who constituted the third party of the Medinites were however the most serious element of danger. No kindness or generous treatment on the part of the prophet would seem to satisfy them. They soon broke off, and ranged themselves with the enemies of the new faith. They did not hesitate to declare openly, that they preferred idolatry with its attendant evils, to the faith of Islam. Thus, the Prophet had to keep an eye on his enemies outside Medina, on the one hand, and those within the city on the other. The Meccans, who had sworn Mohammad's death, were well acquainted, thanks to the party of the Hypocrites and of the Jews at Medina with the real forces of the Muslims. They also knew that the Jews had accepted Mohammad's alliance only from motives of

(1) Sir W. Muir. G. Sale.
(2) Sir W. Muir. G, Sale.

temporary expediency, and that they would break away from him to join the idolaters, as soon as the latter showed themselves in the vicinity of Medina. The safety of the State required the proscription of the traitors who were secretly giving information to the common enemy. About six men were executed for high treason of this nature.

Towards the second year of the "Hijrah" the infidels of Mecca began a series of hostile acts against the Muslims of Medina. They sent men in parties, to commit depredations on the fruit trees of the Muslims of Medina and to carry away their flocks. Now came the moment of severest trial to Islam. It became the duty of the Prophet, to take serious measures to guard against any plot rising from within or a sudden attack from without. He put Medina in a state of military discipline. He had to send frequent reconnoitering parties to guard against any sudden onslaught. No sooner did the Prophet organize his state, than a large well equipped army of the Meccans was afield. A force, consisting of one thousand men, marched under Abu Jahl, a great enemy of Islam towards Medina, to attack the city. The Muslims received timely notice of their enemies intention. A body of three hundred adherents, of whom two thirds were citizens of Medina, was gathered, to forestall the idolaters by occupying the valley of Badr, situated near the sea between Mecca and Medina. When the Prophet saw the army of the infidels approaching the valley he prayed that the little band of Muslims might not be destroyed.

The army of the Meccans advanced into the open space which separated the Muslims from the idolaters. According to Arab usage, the battle was begun by simple combats. The engagement then became general. The result of the battle was that the Meccans were driven back with great loss. Several of their chiefs were slain; and Abu Jahl fell a victim. A large number of idolaters remained prisoners in the hands of the Muslims. They were, contrary to all usage and traditions of the Arabs, treated with the greatest humanity. The Prophet gave strict orders that sympathy should be shown them in their misfortune, and that they should be treated with kindness[1]. These instructions were faithfully obeyed by the Muslims, to whose care the prisoners were confided. Dealing with this event, Sir William Muir quotes one of the prisoners saying:

(1) Al Wakidi. Ibn Hisham. Ibn Athir. etc.

*"Blessing be on the men of Medina; they made us ride, while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat, when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates[1]".*

The remarkable circumstances which led to the victory of Badr, and the results which followed from it, made a deep impression on the minds of the Muslims. They firmly believed that the angels of heaven had battled on their side against their enemies. The division of the spoils created some dissension between the Muslim warriors. For the moment the Prophet divided it equally amongst all. Subsequently, a Koran revelation laid down a rule for future division of the spoils. According to this rule, a fifth was reserved for the public treasury for the support of the poor and indigent; and the distribution of the remaining four fifth was left to the discretion of the Chief of the State.

The next battle between the Quraishites and the Muslims was the battle of Uhud, a hill about four miles to the north of Medina. The idolaters, to revenge their loss at Badr, made tremendous preparations for a new attack upon the Muslims. The next year, they collected an army 3000 strong, of whom 700 were armed with coats of mail, and 200 horses. These forces advanced, under the conduct of Abu Sofian and encamped at a village, six miles from Medina, where they gave themselves up to spoiling the fields and flocks of the Medinites. The Prophet, being much inferior to his enemies in number, at first was determined to keep himself within the town and to receive them there; but afterwards, the advice of some of his companions prevailing, he marched out against them, at the head of 1000 men, of whom 100 were armed with coats of mail; but he had no more than one horse, besides his own, in his whole army. With these forces he halted at Mount Uhud. He was soon abandoned by Abdulla Ibn Obay, the leader of the Hypocrites, with 300 of his followers. Thus, the small force of the Prophet was reduced to 700.

At Mount Uhud the Muslim troops passed the night, and in the morning, after offering their prayers, they advanced into the plain. The Prophet contrived to have the hill at his back, and the better to secure his men from being surrounded; he placed fifty archers on the height in the

(1) Sir William Muir: The Life of Mohammed.

rear, behind the troops, and gave them strict orders, not to leave their posts whatever might happen. When they came to engage, the Prophet had superiority at first, but afterward, through the fault of his archers, who left their position for the sake of plunder, and suffering the enemies' horsemen to surround the Muslims and to attack them in the rear; he lost the day, and was very near losing his life. He was struck down by a shower of stones and wounded in the face by two arrows, and one of his front teeth was broken. Of the Muslims 70 men were killed, among whom was Hamza the Prophet's uncle; of the infidels 22 men were lost[1].

The Quraishites were too exhausted to follow up their advantage, either by attacking Medina or by driving the Muslims from the heights of Uhud. They retreated from the Medinites' territories, after barbarously mutilating the corpses of their dead enemies.

The moral effect of this disastrous battle was such as to encourage some neighboring nomad tribes, to make forays upon the Medinites territories; but most of these were repressed.

The Jews also were not slow to involve in trouble the Prophet and his followers. They tried to create disaffection among his people, and libeled him and his adherents. They mispronounced the words of the Koran, so as to give them an offensive meaning. They also caused their poets who were superior in culture and intelligence, to use their influence to sow sedition among the Muslims. One of their distinguished poets, called Kaab, of the tribe of Nadeer, spared no efforts in publicly deploring the ill success of the idolaters, after their defeat at Badr. By his satires against the Prophet and his disciples and his elegies on the Meccans who had fallen at Badr, he succeeded in exciting the Quraishites to that frenzy of vengeance which broke out at Uhud. He then returned to Medina, where he continued to attack the Prophet and the Muslim men and women, in terms of the most obscene character. Though he belonged to the tribe of Nadeer which had entered into the compact with the Muslims and pledged itself both for the internal and external safety of the State, he openly directed his acts against the commonwealth of which he was a member. Another Jew, Sallam by name, of the same tribe behaved

(1) Ibn Hisham.

equally fiercely and bitterly against the Muslims as did Kaab. He lived with a party of his tribe at *Khaibar* a village five days' journey northwest of Medina. He made every effort to excite the neighboring Arab tribes against the Muslims. The Muslim Commonwealth with the object of securing safety among the community passed a sentence of outlawry upon Kaab and Sallam. The members of another Jewish tribe, namely Bani Quaynouqa, were sentenced to expulsion from the Medinite territory, for having openly and knowingly infringed the terms of the compact. It was necessary to put an end to their hostile actions, for the sake of maintaining peace and security. The Prophet had to go to their headquarters where he required them to enter definitively into the Muslim Commonwealth by embracing Islam, or to leave Medina. To this they replied in the most offensive terms:

*'Thou hast had a quarrel with men, ignorant of the art of war. If thou art desirous of having any dealings with us, we shall show thee that we are men*[1]"

They then shut themselves up in their fortress and set the Prophet and his authority at defiance. The Muslims decided to reduce them, and siege was accordingly laid to their fortress without loss of time. After fifteen days they surrendered. Though the Muslims at firsts intended to inflict some severe punishment on them, they contented themselves by banishing the Bani Quaynouqa. The tribe of Nadeer had now behaved in the same way as Quaynouqa. They had likewise, knowingly and publicly, disregarded the terms of the Charter. The Prophet sent them a message similar to that which was sent to their brethren, the Quaynouqa. They, relying on the assistance of the hypocrites' party, returned a defiant reply. After a siege of fifteen days, they sued for terms. The Muslims renewed their previous offer, and the Jews of Nadeer chose to evacuate Medina. They were allowed to take with them all their movable property, with the exception of their arms. Before leaving Medina, they destroyed all their dwellings, in order to prevent the Muslims from occupying them[2]. Their immovable property, warlike material, etc, which they could not carry away with them, were distributed by the Prophet with the consent of the helpers, among the refugees. A principle was henceforth adopted that any

(1) Ibn Hisham, Ibn Athir.
(2) Ibn Hisham, Ibn Athir.

acquisition, not made in actual warfare, should belong to the state, and that its disposal should be left to the discretion of the ruling authorities[1].

Certain prejudiced Western historians wrongly accuse the Muslims of having treated these Jews of Nadeer with the utmost cruelty. For instance Dr. Prideaux in his "Life of Mohammed" falsely charged them with overtaking the Jews who fled to Syria, and putting them all to death. G. Sale has already saved us the trouble of refuting such erroneous statements.

The expulsion of the Nadeers took place in the fourth year of the "Hijra". The remaining portion of this year, and the early part of the next were passed in repressing the hostile attempts of the nomadic tribes against the Muslims, and inflicting punishment for various murderous forays on the Medinite territories. Of this nature was the expedition against the Christian Arabs of Dumat el Gandal, (a place about seven days' journey to the south of Damascus) who had stopped the Medinite traffic with Syria, and even threatened a raid upon Medina; these marauders, however, fled on the approach of the Muslims, and the Prophet returned to Medina, after concluding a treaty with a neighboring chief, to whom he granted permission of pasturage in the Medinite territories[2].

In the same year, the enemies of Islam made every possible attempt to stir up the tribes against the Muslims. The Jews also took an active if hidden, part in those intrigues. An army of ten thousand men, well equipped marched towards Medina, under the command of Abu Sofian. They encamped near Mount Uhud, a few miles from the city. The Muslims could gather only a much smaller army of three thousand men. Seeing their inferiority in number on the one hand, and the turbulence of the hypocrites within the town of the other they preferred to remain on the defensive They dug a deep moat round the unprotected quarters of Medina and encamped outside the city with a trench in front of them, They relied for safety of the other side upon their allies, the *Quaraiza* who possessed several fortresses at a short distance towards the south and were bound by the compact to assist the Muslims against any raiders.

(1) Vide 'Droits Musulman", by M Querry, p. 337.
(2) C. de Perceval. Vol. III Tabari, Vol. III.

These Jews, however, were induced by the idolaters to violate their pledge and to join the Quraishites. As these Jews were acquainted with the locality and could materially assist the raiders, and as, on the other hand the hypocrites within the walls of the city were waiting for an opportunity to play their part, the situation of the Muslims was most dangerous.

The Siege had already lasted for twenty days. The enemy made great efforts to cross the trench, but every attempt was fiercely repulsed by the small Muslim force. Disunion was now rife in the midst of the besieging army. Their horses were perishing fast, and provisions were becoming less every day. During the night-time a storm of wind and rain caused their tents to be overthrown and their lights extinguished. Abu Sofian and the majority of his army fled away and the rest took refuge with the Quaraiza.[1] The Muslims though they were satisfied with the failure of their enemies could not help thinking that the Victory was unsatisfactory so long as the Quaraiza, who had violated their sworn pledge, remained so near. The Jews might at any time surprise Medina from their side. The Muslims felt it their duty to demand an explanation of the violation of the pledge. This was utterly refused. Consequently the Jews were besieged and compelled to surrender at discretion. They only asked that their punishment should be left to the judgment of Saad Ibn Moaz, the prince of the tribe of Aws. This chief who was a fierce soldier had been wounded in the attack and indeed died of his wounds the following day. Infuriated by the treacherous conduct of the Bani Quaraiza, he gave judgment that the fighting men should be put to death, and that the women and children should become the slaves of the Muslims. The sentence was carried into execution.

Commenting on the harshness of the sentence, Mr. Stanley Lane Poole in the introduction of his 'Selections from the Koran' writes as follows:

> *"It was a harsh, bloody sentence, worthy of the episcopal generals of the army against the Albigenses, or of the deeds of the Augustinian age of Puritanism; but it must be remembered that the crime of these men was high treason against the State during*

(1) Ibn El Athir, Ibn Hisham etc.

*time of siege; and those who have read how Wellington's march could be traced by the bodies of the deserters and pillagers hanging from the trees, need not be surprised at the summary execution of a traitorous clan."*[1].

It was about this time that the Prophet granted to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine, near Mount Sinai, his liberal Charter by which they secured for the Christians noble and generous privileges and immunities. He undertook himself, and enjoined his followers, to protect the Christians, to defend their churches and the residence of their priests and to guard them from all injuries. They were not to be unfairly taxed; no bishop was to be driven out of his diocese; no Christian was to be forced to reject his religion; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery; no pilgrim was to be stopped from his pilgrimage, nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake of building mosques or houses for the Muslims. Christian women married to Muslims were to enjoy their own religion, and not to be subjected to compulsion or annoyance of any kind. If the Christians should stand in need of assistance for the repair of their churches or monasteries, or any other matter pertaining to their religion, the Muslims were to assist them. This was not to be considered as supporting their religion, but as simply rendering them assistance in special circumstances. Should the Muslims be engaged in hostilities, with outside Christians, no Christian resident among them was to be harmed. The Prophet declared that any Muslim violating any clause of the Charter should be regarded as a transgressor of God's Commandments, a violator of His Testament and neglectful of His faith[2].

## THE PEACE OF HUDEIBIYA

Six years had already elapsed since the Prophet and his Meccan followers fled from their birth-place. Their hearts began to yearn for their homes and for their temple of the Kaaba. The season of the pilgrimage approached. The Prophet announced his intention to visit the holy centre.

(1) Vide Stanley Lane Poole, Selections from the Quran.
(2) Abul Feda; Ibn Athir : Al Wakidi etc.

Numerous voices of his disciples responded to the call. Preparations were soon made for the journey to Mecca. The Prophet accompanied by seven or eight hundred Muslims, Refugees and Helpers, all totally unarmed set out on the pilgrimage. The Quraishites who were still full of animosity towards the Muslims gathered a large army to prevent the true believers from entering Mecca. They maltreated the envoy that the Prophet had sent to ask their permission to visit the holy places. After much difficulty a treaty was concluded by which it was agreed that all hostilities should cease for ten years; that any one coming from the Quraishites to the Prophet without the permission of the guardian or chief, should be given back to the idolaters; that any Muslim persons going over to the Meccans should not be surrendered; that any tribe desirous of entering into alliance, either with the Quraishites or with the Muslims should be at liberty to do so without disputes; that the Muslims should go back to Medina on the present occasion and stop advancing further; that they should be permitted in the following year to visit Mecca, and to remain there for three days with the arms they used on journeys namely, their scimitars in sheaths.

The treaty thus ended, the Prophet returned with his people to Medina.[1]

About this time it was revealed to the Prophet that his mission should be universal[2]. He dispatched several envoys to invite the neighboring sovereigns to Islam. The embassy to the king of Persia Khosroes Parvis, was received with disdain and contumely. He was haughtily amazed at the boldness of the Meccan fugitive in addressing him on terms of equality. He was so enraged that he tore into pieces the Prophet's letter of Invitation to Islam, and dismissed the envoy from his presence with great contempt. When the Prophet received information on this treatment, he calmly observed: "Thus will the Empire of Khosroes be torn to pieces"[3].

The embassy to Heracles, the Emperor of the Romans was received much more politely and reverentially. He treated the ambassador with great respect and sent the Prophet a gracious reply to his message.

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(1) That is without fulfilling their proposed Pilgrimage.

(2) Koran: chap. 7: 158.

(3) Ibn Hisham Vol. VII.

Another envoy was sent to an Arab prince of the Ghassanite tribe, a Christian feudatory of Heracles. This prince instead of receiving the envoy with any respect cruelly murdered him. This act caused great consternation among the Muslims who considered it as an outrage of international obligations.

In the same year the Jews of Khaibar, a strongly fortified territory at a distance of four days' journey from Medina, showed implacable hatred towards the Muslims. Several branches of the "Nadeer" and "Quoraiza" took refuge at Khaibar, which contributed to increase the feeling of animosity on the part of their brethren towards the Prophet and his followers. United by alliance with the tribe of "Ghatfan" as well as with other cognate tribes, the Jews of Khaibar made serious attempts to form a coalition against the Muslims. The Prophet and his adherents were apprised of this movement. Immediate measures had to be taken in order to repress any new attack upon Medina. An expedition of 1400 men was soon prepared to march against Khaibar. The allies of the Jews left them to face the war with the Muslims all alone. The Jews firmly resisted the attacks of the Muslims, but eventually all their fortresses had to be surrendered, one after the other to their enemies. They prayed for forgiveness which was accorded to them on certain conditions. Their lands and immovable property were secured to them, together with the free practice of their religion(1).

After subduing Khaibar, the Muslims returned to Medina in safety.

Before the end of the year, it being the seventh year of the Hijra, the Prophet and his adherents availed themselves of their armistice with the Quraishites to accomplish their desire of visiting the holy Kaaba. The Prophet accompanied by 200 Muslims went on his journey to Mecca to perform the rites of pilgrimage. On the occasion the Quraishites evacuated the city during the three days on which the ceremonies lasted.

Muir in his Life of Mohammad Vol. II comments on the incident as:

*"It was surely a strange sight which at this time presented itself at the vale of Mecca, a sight unique in the history of the*

(1) Ibn Athir, Ibn Hisham, Caussin de Perceval, etc.

*world. The ancient city is for three days evacuated by all its inhabitants high and low, every house deserted, and, as they retire, the exiled converts, many years banished from their birthplace, approach in a great body accompanied by their allies, revisit the empty homes of their childhood and within the short allotted space, fulfill the rites of pilgrimage. The outside inhabits climbing the heights around, take refuge under tents or other shelter among the hills and glens; and clustering on the overhanging peak of Abu Qubeis, thence watch the movements of the visitors beneath, as with the Prophet at their head, they make the circuit of the Kaaba and rapid procession between Essafa and Marwaii, and anxiously scan every figure, if perchance they may recognize among the worshippers some long-lost friend or relative. It was a scene rendered possible only by the throes which gave birth to Islam".*

In accordance with the terms of the treaty, the Muslims left Mecca at the end of three days' visit. This peaceful visit was followed by important conversion among the Quraishites. Khalid Ibn el Walid, known as the Sword of God, who, before this, had been a bitter enemy of Islam and who commanded the Quraishites Cavalry at Uhud; and Amr Ibn el Aas, another important character and warrior adopted the new faith.

When the Prophet and his followers returned to Medina, they arranged an expedition to exact retribution from the Ghassanite Prince who killed the Muslim envoy. A force of 3000 men, under the Prophet's adopted son Zaid, was sent to take reparation from the offending tribe. Khalid Ibn el Walid was one of the generals chosen for the expedition. When they reached the neighborhood of Muta, a village to the south east of the Dead Sea, they met with an overwhelming force of Arabs and Romans who were assembled to oppose them. The Muslims, however, resolved resolutely to push forward. Their coinage was of no avail and they suffered great losses. In this battle Zaid and Jaafar, a cousin of the Prophet and several other notables were killed. Khalid Ibn el Walid, by a series of maneuvers, succeeded in drawing off the army, and conducting it without further losses to Medina. A month later, however, Amr Ibn el Aas marched unopposed through the lands of the hostile tribes, received their submission and restored the prestige of Islam on the Syrian frontier[1].

(1) Ch. Hughes' Dictionary of Islam.

## THE CONQUEST OF MECCA

About the end of the seventh year of the Hijra, the Quraishites and their allies, the Bani Bakr violated the terms of the peace concluded at Hudeibiya by attacking the Bani Khuzaah who were in alliance with the Muslims. The Bani Khuzaah of whom a number of men were massacred appealed to the Prophet for help and protection. The Prophet determined to make a stop to the reign of injustice and oppression which had lasted long at Mecca. He immediately gathered ten thousand men to march against the idolaters. On January 1st 630, the Prophet began his march. After eight days the Muslim army halted and alighted at Marwat el Zahran, a day's journey from Mecca. On the night of his arrival, Abu Sofian, who was delegated by the Quraishites to ask the Prophet to abandon his project, presented himself and besought an interview. On the morrow it was granted. "Has the time not come, O Abu Sofian", said the Prophet, "for thee to acknowledge that there is no deity save God, and that I am His apostle?" Abu Sofian, after hesitating for a while, pronounced the prescribed formula of belief, and adopted Islam. He was then sent back to prepare the city for the Prophet's approach. With the exception of a slight resistance by certain clans headed by Ikrima and Safwan, in which many Muslims were killed, the Prophet entered Mecca almost unopposed. The city which had treated him so cruelly, driven him and his faithful band for refuge amongst strangers, the city which had sworn his life and the lives of his devoted adherents, now lay at his mercy. His old persecutors were now completely at his feet. The Prophet entered Mecca on his favorite camel 'Al Kaswa', having Abu Bakr on his right hand, Usaid on his left, and Usama walking behind him. On his way he recited a chapter of the Koran, known as the chapter of the Victory[1]. The Muslim army entered the city unostentatiously and peacefully. No house was robbed; no man or woman was insulted. The Prophet granted a general amnesty to the entire population of Mecca. Only four criminals, whom justice condemned, were proscribed. He however, ordered the destruction of all idols and pagan images of worship, upon which the 360 idols which the Holy temple of Kaaba contained were thrown down. The Prophet himself destroyed a wooden pigeon hanged from the roof and regarded as one of the deities of the Quraishites. During the downfall of the images and idols he was heard to cry aloud. "*God is great. God is*

(1) Koran, chap. 110.

*great. Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is evanescent*" The old idolaters observed thoughtfully the destruction of their gods which were utterly powerless. After the Prophet had abolished these pagan idols and every pagan rite, he delivered a sermon to the assembled people. He dwelt upon the natural brotherhood of man in the words of the Koran as contained in chapter 49, verse 10[1].

Now great multitudes came to adopt Islam and take the oath of allegiance to the Prophet. For this purpose an assembly was held at Mount el Safa. Omar, acting as the Prophet's deputy administered the oath, whereby the people bound themselves not to adore any deity but God, to obey the Prophet, to abstain from theft, adultery, infanticide, lying and backbiting. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy embodied in the chapter of Victory in the Koran[2]..

During his stay at Mecca, the Prophet dispatched his principal disciples in every direction to preach Islam among the wild tribes of the desert and call them to the true religion of God. He sent small detachments of his troops into the suburbs that destroyed the temples of Al Uzza. Suwaa and Manat, the three famous idols in the temples of the neighboring tribes. The Prophet gave strict orders that these expeditions should be carried out in a peaceable manner[3]. These injunctions were obeyed in all cases, with one exception. The troops under Khalid Ibn el Walid, the fierce newly-converted warrior, killed a few of the Bani Jazima. When the news of this wanton bloodshed reached the Prophet he was deeply grieved, and exclaimed. "Oh, my Lord, I am innocent of what Khalid had done", and he dispatched a large sum of money for the widows and orphans of the slain, and severely rebuked Khalid[4]. At this time the tribes of Hawazin and Thakif showed unwillingness to render obedience to the Muslims without resistance. They formed a league with the intention of attacking the Prophet. But he was vigilant enough to frustrate their plan. A big battle was fought with this new enemy of Islam near Hunein, a deep and narrow defile nine miles to the north-east of

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(1) "Verily the true believers are brethren; wherefore make peace among your brethren; and fear God, that ye may obtain mercy".

(2)"When victory and triumph are come from God and thou seest hosts of people embrace the religion of God, you will then praise the glory of your Lord and implore His pardon, as He is ever ready to welcome Penitence".

(3) and (4) T.P Hughes.i Dictionary of Islam.

Mecca. The idolaters were utterly defeated. One body of the enemy consisting chiefly of the Thakif tribe, took refuge in their fortified city of Tayef, which, as the reader may remember, eight or nine years before had dismissed the Prophet from within its walls with injuries and insults. The remainder of the defeated force consisting principally of the Hawazin sought refuge at a camp in the valley of Autas. This camp was raided by the Muslim troops. The families of the Hawazin, their flocks and herds with all their other effects were captured by the troops of the Prophet. Tayef was then besieged for a few days only, after which the Prophet raised the siege, well knowing that the people of Tayef would soon be forced by circumstances to submit without bloodshed. Returning to his camp where the prisoners of Hawazin were left at safety, the Prophet found a deputation from this hostile tribe who begged him to set free their families. The Prophet replied that he was willing to give back his own share of the captives and that of the children of Abdul Muttalib, but that he could not force his followers to abandon the fruits of their victory. The disciples followed the generous example of their Teacher and about six thousand people were in a moment set free(1). The spirit of liberty influenced the hearts of several members of the Thakif tribe who offered their allegiance and soon became earnest Muslims.

The Prophet now returned to Medina fully satisfied with the achievements of his mission.

The ninth year of the Hijra is known as the year of embassies, as being the year in which the various tribes of Arabia submitted to the claim of the Prophet and sent embassies to render homage to him. These tribes had been awaiting the issue of the war between Mohammad and the Quraishites; but as soon as that tribe - the principal of the whole nation, and the descendants of Ishmael, whose prerogatives none offered to dispute - had submitted, they were satisfied that it was not in their power to oppose Mohammad(2). Hence their embassies flocked into Medina to make their submission to him. The conquest of Mecca decided the fate of idolatry in Arabia. Now deputations began to arrive from all sides to render the adherence to Islam of various tribes. Among the rest, five Princes of the tribe of *Himyar* professed Islam and sent ambassadors

(1) Cf. Tabari. Vol. III; Ibn Hisham; Ibn El Athir Vol. II.
(2) G. Sale. Introduction. to Quran.

to notify the same. These were the Princes of Yemen, Mahra, Oman and Yamama[1].

The idolaters of Tayef, the very people who had driven the Preacher of Islam from their midst with violence and contempt now sent a deputation to pray forgiveness and asked to be numbered amongst his followers. They begged however for temporary preservation of their idols. As a last appeal they begged for one month a grace only. But this even was not conceded. The Prophet said Islam and the idols could not exist together. They then begged for exemption from the daily prayers The Prophet replied that without devotion religion would be nothing. At last they submitted to all that was required of them. They however, asked to be exempted from destroying the idols with their own hands. This was granted. The Prophet selected Abu Sofian and Mughira to destroy the idols of the Tayefites the chief of which being the notorious idols of Al Lat. This was carried out amidst cries of despair and grief from the Women of Tayef.

The conversion of this tribe of Tayef is worthy of notice. This tribe which hitherto had proved hostile to the new faith was noted among the Arabs for its idolatrous priesthood. A small detachment under Aly was sent to reduce them to obedience and to destroy their idols. The prince of the tribe was Adi, the son of the famous Hatim, whose generosity was spoken of all over the peninsula of Arabia. On the approach of the Muslim forces Adi fled to Syria, leaving his sister with some of his principal clansmen, to fall into the hands of the Muslims. These were conducted by Aly with every sign of respect and sympathy to Medina. When the daughter of Hatim came before the Prophet she addressed him in the following words: "Apostle of God, my father is dead; my brother, my only relation has fled into the mountains, on the approach of the Muslims. I cannot ransom myself; I count on your generosity for my deliverance. My father was an illustrious man, the prince of his tribe, a man who ransomed prisoners, protected the honor of women, fed the poor, consoled the afflicted and was deaf to no appeal". "Thy father", answered the Prophet, "had the virtues of a true Muslim; if it were permitted to invoke the Mercy of God on any whose life was passed in idolatry, I would pray to God for mercy for the soul of Hatim". Then,

(1) Cf.. Abul. Feda G. Sale; Introduction to Quran.

addressing the Muslims around him, he said: "The daughter of Hatim is free; her father was a generous and humane man; God loves and rewards the merciful". With the daughter of Hatim, all her people were set at liberty. She proceeded to Syria and related to her brother the generosity of Mohammad. Adi, touched by gratitude, hastened to Medina where he was kindly received by the Prophet. He professed Islam and returned to his people, and persuaded them to abandon idolatry. They all submitted and became devoted Muslims(1).

Hitherto no prohibition had been enforced against idolaters entering the Holy Kaaba or performing their abominable rites within the sacred precincts. Towards the end of the ninth year of the Hijra during the month of pilgrimage Aly was delegated by the Prophet to read a proclamation that ran as follows:

*"No idolater shall after this year perform the pilgrimage; no one shall make the circuit of the temple naked (such a disgraceful custom was practiced by the heathen Arabs), any treaty with the Prophet shall continue in force, but four months are allowed to every man to return to his territories; after that there will be no obligation on the Prophet, except towards those with whom treaties have been concluded."* (2)

The vast multitude who had listened to the above declaration returned to their homes and before the following year was over the majority of them were Muslims.

During the tenth year of the Hijra, as in the preceding one, numerous embassies continued to pour into Medina from all parts of Arabia, to testify to the adhesion of their chiefs and their tribes. Teachers were sent by the Prophet into the different provinces to teach the new converts the principles and precepts of Islam. These teachers were invariably given the following injunctions when they were about to depart on their mission:

"Deal gently with the people, and be not harsh; cheer them, and do

(1) Cf Ibn Hisham; Ibn Athir. Vol. II.. Amir Sayed Aly; Spirit of Islam.
(2) Abul Feda ; Ibn Athir ; Ibn Hisham.

not look down upon them with contempt. Ye will meet with many believers in the Holy Scriptures[1], who will ask you 'What is the key to heaven?' Answer them that it (the key to heaven) is to bear witness to the Divine truth and to do good"[2].

Thus, the mission of the Prophet Mohammad was now accomplished; the whole work was achieved in his lifetime. Idolatry with its nameless abominations was entirely destroyed. The people who were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vices in regions where Spiritual life was utterly unknown, were now united in one bond of faith, hope and charity. The tribes which had been, from time immemorial, engaged in perpetual wars were now united together by the ties of brotherhood, love and harmony. Henceforth, their aims are not confined to this earth alone; but there is something beyond the grave much higher, purer and diviner - calling them to the practice of charity, goodness, justice and universal love. They could now perceive that God was not that which they had carved out of wood or stone, but the Almighty, Loving, Merciful, the Creator of the Universe.

On the return of the sacred month of the pilgrimage, the Prophet, under the presentiment of his approaching end, determined to make a farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. In February 632, he left Medina with a very considerable concourse of Muslims. It is stated that from 90,000 to 140,000 persons accompanied the Prophet[3]. On his arrival at the holy places, from which every trace of the old superstition had been removed and which in accordance with his orders of the previous year, no idolater was to visit unless he assumed the pilgrim garb. Before completing all rites of the pilgrimage, he addressed the assembled multitude from the top of the Mount Arafat in the following words:

> *"Ye people! Listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all; and remember, ye*

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(1) i.e. Jews or Christians.
(2) Ibn Hisham.
(3) Ibn Hisham; Ibn Athir, Vol. II.

*shall have to appear before your Lord Who shall demand from you an account for all your actions. Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you... Verily ye have taken them on the security of God and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God. And your slaves see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear, and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive then part with them; for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated. Ye people, Listen to my words and understand them. Know that all Muslims are brothers. Ye are one brotherhood; but no man shall take aught from his brother, unless by his free consent. Keep yourselves from injustice. Let him who is present tell this to him who is absent. It may be that he who is told this afterward may remember better than he who has now heard it".*

The Prophet concluded his sermon by exclaiming, "O Lord, I have fulfilled my message and accomplished my work". The assembled multitude all in one voice cried, "Yea, verily thou hast". The Prophet again exclaimed, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, bear witness unto it".

Having rigorously performed all the ceremonies of the pilgrimage, that his example might be followed by all Muslims for all succeeding ages, the Prophet returned with his followers to Medina.

The eleventh year of the Hijra, being the last year of Mohammad's life, was spent at Medina. There he settled the organization of the provincial and tribal communities which had adopted Islam and become the component parts of the Muslim federation. More officers had to be deputed to the interior provinces for the purpose of teaching their inhabitants the precepts of the religion, administering justice, and collecting tithes. Muaz-Ibn-Jabal was sent to Yemen. On his departure to that distant province the Prophet enjoined him to use his own discretion, in the event of his being unable to find express authority in the Quran. Aly was deputed to Yamama in the south-east of the Peninsula. To him the Prophet said: "Never decide between any two parties who come to you for justice unless you first hear both of them".

A force was now being prepared under Osama, the son of Zaid, who

was killed at Muta, against the Byzantines, to exact long delayed reparation for the murder of the envoy in Syria, when the news of the Prophet's sickness and failing health caused that expedition to be stopped. This news was soon noised abroad and produced disorder in some districts. Three pretenders had arisen who gave themselves out as prophets, tried by all kinds of imposture to win over their tribes. The most dangerous of these pretenders was known as Al Aswad Al Ansi. He was a chief of Yemen and a man of great wealth and sagacity and a clever conjurer. He soon succeeded in gaining over his tribesmen, and with their help reduced to subjection many of the neighboring towns. He killed Shahr whom the Prophet had appointed as Governor of Sanaa in the place of his father Bazan who had just died. Bazan had been the viceroy of Yemen, under Khosroes of Persia, and after he had adopted Islam, was allowed by the Prophet to remain as Governor of Yemen. He was able to convert to Islam the entire Persian colony in that province. Al Aswad, the conjurer, had now killed Shahr, but soon after, he was massacred by the Persians of Yemen.

The other two Pretenders, Tulayha and Haroun by name, were not suppressed until after the death of the Prophet, during the reign of Abu Bakr. Haroun, better known as Mussaylamah, addressed to the Prophet a letter which ran as follows:

> *"From Musaylamah, the Prophet of God to Mohammad the Prophet of God. Peace be to you. I am your partner. Let the exercise of authority be divided between us. Half the earth will be mine, and half will belong to your Quraish. But the Quraishites are too greedy to be satisfied with a just division".*

To this letter the Prophet replied as follows: "From Mohammad the Apostle of God, to Mussaylamah the liar. Peace be to those who follow the right path. The earth belongs to God. It is He who maketh to reign whomsoever He pleaseth. Only those will prosper who fear the Lord".

The health of the Prophet grew worse. His last days were remarkable for the calmness and serenity of his mind. He was able, though weak and feeble to lead the public prayers, until within three days of his death. He requested that he might be permitted to stay at Ayesha's house close to the mosque, during his illness; an arrangement to which his other wives

assented. As long as his strength lasted, he took part in the public prayers. The last time he appeared in the mosque he addressed the congregation, after the usual prayers were over in the following words:

"O Muslims, if I have wronged anyone of you, here I am to answer for it; if I owe aught to anyone, all I may happen to possess belongs to you". A man in the crowd rose and claimed three Dirhams which he had given to a poor man at the request of the Prophet. They were immediately paid back with these words: "Better to blush in this world than in the next". The Prophet then prayed and implored God's mercy for those who had fallen in the persecution of their enemies. He recommended to all his followers the observance of religious duties and the leading of a life of peace and good-will. He concluded his advice with the following verse of the Koran: "The future mansion (of paradise) We will give unto them who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to do wrong; for a happy issue shall attend the pious". Then he spoke with emotion and with a voice still so powerful as to reach beyond the outer doors of the mosque: "By the Lord in Whose hand lies the soul of Mohammad" he said, "as to myself no man can lay hold on me in any matter; I have not made lawful anything excepting what God hath made lawful; nor have I prohibited aught, but that which God in His Book hath prohibited". Then turning to the women who sat close by, he exclaimed: "O Fatima, my daughter, and Safia, my aunt, Work ye both that which shall procure you acceptance with the Lord, for verily I have no power to save you in any wise".

He then rose and reentered the house of Ayesha(1) After this, the Prophet never appeared at public prayers A few hours after he returned from the mosque, the Prophet died whilst laying his head on the bosom of Ayesha. As Soon as the Prophet's death was announced a crowd of people gathered at the door of the house of Ayesha exclaiming "How can our apostle be dead?" "No", said Omar, "he is not dead, he will be restored to us, and those are traitors to the cause of Islam who say he is dead. If they say so let them be cut in pieces". But Abu Bakr entered the house at this moment, and after he had touched the body of the Prophet with demonstration of profound affection, he appeared at the door and addressed the crowd with the following speech:

(1) G. Sale In his Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Koran.

*"O Muslims, if any of you has been worshipping Mohammad then let me tell you that Mohammad is dead. But if you really do worship God, then know you that God is living and will never die. Do you forget the verse in the Koran: "Mohammad is but an apostle, before whom other apostles have already passed?' and also the other verse: "Thou shalt surely die (O Mohammad) and they also shall die?"*

Upon hearing this speech of Abu Bakr, Omar acknowledged his error and the crowd was satisfied and dispersed.

Al Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, presided at the preparation for the burial and the body was duly washed and perfumed. There was some dispute between the Quraishites and the Ansars as to the place of burial; But Abu Bakr settled the dispute by affirming that he had heard the Prophet say' that a prophet should be buried at the very spot where he died. A grave was accordingly dug in the ground within the house of Ayesha, and under the bed on which the Prophet died. In this grave the body was buried, and the usual rites were performed by those who were present.

Thus the glorious life of the Prophet Mohammad ended. The Arabs, being then united in one faith and under one banner and one prince, found themselves in a position to make those conquests which extended the Mohammedan faith over so great a part of the world(1).

The following comment on the Prophet's life by Thomas Carlyle, will be found to be as true a picture of Mohammad's character as can possibly be written by the pen of a European historian. In his lecture "The Hero, as Prophet", Thomas Carlyle writes;

*"Mohamed himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments - nay, on enjoyments of any kind. His household was of the frugalest, his common diet barley-bread and water; sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. They record with just*

(1) G. Sale in his Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Koran.

*pride that he would mend his own shoes, patch his own cloak. A poor hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man I should say; something better in him than hunger of any sort; or these wild Arab men fighting and jostling three-and-twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not have reverenced him so. These were wild men, bursting ever and anon into quarrel, into all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right, worth and manhood; no man could have commanded them. They called him Prophet, you say? Why he stood there face to face with them; bare, not enshrined in any mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counseling, ordering in the midst of them, they must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what ye like. No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that of itself."*

*"His last words are a prayer, broken ejaculations of a heart struggling up in trembling hope towards its Maker. We cannot say that his religion made him worse; it made him better; good not bad. Generous things are recorded of him: when he lost his daughter, the thing he answers is, in his own dialect everyway sincere, and yet equivalent to that of Christians, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord". He answered in like manner of Zaid, his emancipated well-beloved slave, the second of the believers. Zaid had fallen in the war Tabuc, the first of Mahomet's fighting against the Greeks. Mahomet said it was well; 'Zaid had done his Master's work, Zaid had now gone to his Master: it was all well with Zaid'. Yet Zaid's daughter found him weeping over the body; - the old greyhaired man melting in tears! 'What do I see?' said she. 'You see a friend weeping over his friend'. He went out for the last time into the mosque two days before his death; asked, if he had injured any man? Let his own back bear the stripes if he owed any man? A voice answered: 'Yes my three drachmas borrowed on such an occasion' Mohammed ordered them to be paid. 'Better be in shame now', said he, 'than at the day of judgment'. You remember Khadija and the 'No' by Allah! Traits of this kind show us the genuine man, the brother of us all, brought visible*

*through twelve centuries the veritable Son of our common Mother"*[1].

Mr. Bosworth Smith, apparently an unprejudiced English historian in his "Mohammad and Mohammedanism comments as follows:

*"Mohammad did not, indeed, himself weld together into a homogeneous whole a vast system of states like Charles the Great. He was not a philosophic king, like Marcus Aurelius nor a philosopher, like Aristotle, or like Bacon, ruling by pure reason the world of thought for centuries with a more than kingly power, he was not a legislator for all mankind nor even the highest part of it, like Justinian nor did he cheaply earn the title of the Great by being the first among rulers to turn, like Constantine, from the setting to the rising sun. He was not a philanthropist, like the Greatest of the Stoics.*

*"Nor was he the apostle of the highest form of religion and civilization combined, like Gregory or Boniface, like Leo or Alfred the Great. He was less, indeed, than most of these in one or two of the elements that go to make up human greatness, but he was also greater. Half Christian and half Pagan, half civilized and half barbarian, it was given to him in a marvelous degree to unite the peculiar excellences of the one with the peculiar excellences of the other. 'I have seen', said the ambassador sent to the triumphant Quraish at the despised exile at Medina 'I have seen the Persian Khosroes and the Greek Heraclius sitting upon their thrones; but never did I see a man ruling his equals as does Mohammad."*

*"Head of the state as well as of the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the powers without its instruments, and without its supports."*

(1) Lectures on heroes by Thomas Carlyle 1.66.

*"By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammad is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write,*[1] *he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of law, a Book of Common Prayer, and a bible in one, and is reverenced to this day by a sixth of the whole of the human race, as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It was the one miracle claimed by Mohammad - his standing miracle he called it, and a miracle indeed it is. But looking at the circumstances of the time, at the unbounded reverence of his followers, and comparing him with the fathers of the church or with mediaeval saints, to my mind the most miraculous thing about Mohammed is, that he never claimed the power of working miracles. Whatever he had said he could do, his disciples would straightway have seen him do. They could not help attributing to him miraculous acts which he never did, and which he always denied he could do. What more crowning proof of his sincerity is needed? Mohammad to the end of his life claimed for himself that title only, with which he had begun, and which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe, agree in yielding to him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God*[2]*".*

## THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD

It is only right that, before bringing the biography of the Prophet to a conclusion, I should give illustration of his chief traits and character, as already brought to light and passed as authentic by distinguished European critics.

Sir William Muir writes[3]:

**Personal Appearance and Gait (of the Prophet)**: "His form, though

(1) All trustworthy commentators and Muslim Historians agree in that the Prophet Mohammad was absolutely illiterate. He could never read or write. (Cf. Ibn Hisham Al Wakidi; G. Sale; Sir Wm. Muir; The Koran).

(2) Vide 'Mohammed and Mohammedanism' by Bosworth Smith, 1. 340.

(3) Vide "The Life of Mohammad by Sir Wm. Muir.

little above mean height, was stately and commanding. The depth of feeling in his dark black eyes and the winning expression of a face otherwise attractive, gained the confidence and love of strangers; even at the first sight. His features often unbeded into a smile full of grace and condescension 'He was' say his Contemporary biographers, 'the handsomest and bravest, the brightest faced and most generous of men'. Yet when anger kindled in his piercing glance, the object of his displeasure might well quail before it. His stern frown was an augury of death to many a trembling captive, in later years, the erect figure began to stoop; but the step was still firm and quick. His gait has been likened to that of one descending rapidly a hill. When he made haste, it was with difficulty that one kept pace with him. He never turned, even if his mantle caught in a thorny bush, so that his attendants talked and laughed freely behind him, secure of being unobserved".

**His habits:** "Thorough and complete in all his actions, he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. The same habit pervaded his manner in social intercourse if he turned in conversation towards a friend, he turned not partially, but with his full face and his whole body, in shaking hands he was not the first to withdraw his own; nor was he the first to break off in converse with a stranger, nor to turn away his ear".

**Simplicity of his Life:** "A patriarchal simplicity pervaded his life. His custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave alms, he would place it with his own hand in that of the petitioner. He aided his wives in the household duties, mended his clothes, tied up the goats, and even cobbled his sandals. His ordinary dress was of plain white cotton stuff, made like his neighbor; but on high and festive occasion he wore garments of fine linen, striped or dyed in red. He never reclined at meals. He ate with his fingers; and when he had finished, he would lick them before he wiped his hands. He lived with his wives in a row of low and homely cottages, built of unbaked bricks, the apartments separated by walls of palm-branches rudely daubed with mud, while curtains of leather, or of black haircloth, supplied the place of doors and windows He was to all easy of access, - 'even as the river's bank to him that draweth water from it' - yet he maintained the state and dignity of real power. No approach was suffered to familiarity of action or speech. The Prophet must be addressed in subdued accents and in a reverential style,

His word was absolute; his bidding a law. Embassies and deputations were received with the utmost courtesy and consideration. In the issue of prescripts, bearing on their representations, or in other matters of state, the Prophet displayed all the qualifications of an able and experienced ruler, as the reader[1] will have observed from the numerous examples given. And what renders this the more strange, is that he was never known himself to write".

**Urbanity and Kindness of Disposition:** "A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration, with which Mohammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked saying no. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred silence. "He was more bashful", says his wife Ayesha, 'than a veiled virgin; and if anything displeased him, it was rather from his face, than by his words, that we discovered it; he never smote anyone, but in the service of God, not even a woman or a servant'. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present, however small. When seated by a friend, he did not haughtily advance his knees towards him. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favored guest. If he met any one rejoicing at success, he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted, he sympathized tenderly. Gentle and indulgent towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play, with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in time of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort, of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character'.

**Friendship:** "Mohammad was also a faithful friend. He loved Abu Bakr with the close affection of a brother, Aly, with the fond partiality of a father. Zaid, the Christian slave of his wife Khadija, was so strongly won by the kindness of the Prophet, that he preferred to remain at Mecca, rather than return home with his own father: 'I will not leave thee', he said, clinging to his patron, 'for thou hast been a father and a

(1) i.e. the reader of Sir Wm. Muir's 'Life of Mohammed'.

mother to me'. The friendship of Mohammad survived the death of Zaid, and his son Osama was 'treated by him with distinguished favor for the father's sake. Osman and Omar were also the objects of his special attachment; and the enthusiasm, with which at Al Hodeibiya, the Prophet entered into 'the Pledge of the Tree', and swore that he would defend his beleaguered son-in-law even to the death, was a signal proof of faithful friendship. Numerous other instances of Mohammad's ardent and unwavering regard might be adduced. And his affections were in no instance misplaced; they were ever reciprocated by a warm and self-sacrificing love".

**Moderation and Magnanimity:** "In the exercise of a power absolutely dictatorial, Mohammad was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation to wards his enemies, when once the inhabitants of Mecca who had cheerfully mocked his mission, might have induced its conquer to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Mohammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution, treated even the foremost of his opponents with gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdallah and the disaffected citizens of Medina, who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency, with which he received the submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory"[1].

Some Christian biographers of the Prophet dwell too much on what they termed his cruelty towards his enemies. Honestly speaking, cruelty was nowhere shown in the conduct of the Prophet, as the reader will have observed in his Life, as given in the present work.

It is not the intention of the author to occupy too much space in refuting 'the numerous misrepresentations made by hostile biographers. However, as one instance of the false charge of cruelty, brought against the Prophet or his followers without foundation, I quote a statement on the, subject by George Sale:-

(1) Vide' Sir William Muir's "The Life of Mohammed".

"Dr. Prideaux, speaking of Mohammad's obliging those of Al Nadir to quit their settlements, says that a party of his men pursued those who fled into Syria, and having overtaken them, put them all to the sword, excepting only one man that escaped. 'With such cruelty', continues he, 'did those barbarians first set lip to fight for that impostor they had been deluded into[1]'. But a learned gentleman has already observed that is all grounded on a mistake which the doctor was led into by an imperfection in the printed edition of Elmacinas; where, after mention of the expulsion of the Nadirites, are inserted some incoherent words, relating to another action which happened the month before, and wherein seventy Muslims, instead of others to the sword, were surprised and put to the sword themselves, together with their leader Al Mondar Ebn Omar, Caab Ebn. Zeid alone escaping. (Vide Gagnier, Vit. Moh. p. 72)[2]".

Sir William Muir continues his remarks on the person and character of the Prophet as follows:

**Domestic Life**: "In domestic life, the conduct of Mohammad was exemplary. As a husband his fondness and devotion were entire. As a father he was loving and tender. In his youth, he lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty-five he married a widow, forty years old, during whose lifetime, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone. Yet it is remarkable that in that period were composed most of these passages of the Koran, in which the black eyed 'Houries' reserved for Believers in Paradise, are depicted in such glowing colors".

Sir William Muir, following the example of other Christian writers, has attributed the Prophet's polygamy to 'unchecked range of his uxorious inclinations', and when viewing the social and domestic life of Mohammad, 'fairly and impartially', he saw it to be checkered by light and shade; and that, "while there is much to form the subject of nearly 'unqualified' praise, there is likewise much which cannot be spoken of but in terms of reprobation".

Sir William Muir himself, as quoted above, states that in his youth the Prophet lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty five married a

(1) Prideaux's Life of Mah. p. 82.
(2) G. Sale, Trans. of Al Koran p. 405, Fred Warne & Co.

widow, forty years old, *during whose life-time, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone*. It is obviously absurd, to think that a man whose character was such, could have any 'range of uxorious inclinations'.

Sir William Muir asserts, that "it was not until the mature age of fifty-four, that the Prophet made the 'trials' of Polygamy". It is obviously a contradiction, unworthy of a fair and impartial critic, to think for a moment that at such an advanced age, a man who had, 'lived in his youth a virtuous life', and who, 'at the age of twenty five, married a widow, forty years old, during whose life-time, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone, should have sexual inclinations. To any really impartial biographer and also to any thoughtful reader this is quite impossible.

But the marriages of the Holy Prophet have furnished his critics with their chief weapons of attack, and the interested missionary has gone so far as to call him a voluptuary, although some of his own revered spiritual leaders and prophets were chronicled to posses even as many as a few hundred wives[1]. For this reason I give here a few particulars regarding the Prophet's marriages.

His first marriage was contracted when he was twenty five years of age, and the widow, Khadija, whom he married was forty years old, that is fifteen years his senior. It was with her and her alone, that he passed all the years of his youth and manhood, until she died three years before the Hijra, or emigration to Medina, when he was already an old man of fifty. This circumstance alone is sufficient to give the lie to those who would belittle him and call him a voluptuary. After her death, while still at Mecca, he married Sauda and Ayesha, the latter of whom was his only virgin wife, and she was the daughter of his intimate and illustrious friend and helper, Abu Bakr. Then followed the emigration to Medina; and subsequent to the emigration, he had to fight many battles with his enemies, the Quraish, or such tribes as sided with the Quraish and persecuted the Muslims. The result of these battles, was a great

(1) David had six wives and numerous concubines, Soliman had as many as 700 wives and as many as 300 Concubines, (Kings xi:3) Rehoboams had 18 wives and Sixty concubines (32 Chron, xi 21).

discrepancy between the number of males and females, and as his favorite followers fell in the field of battle, fighting his enemies, the care of their families developed upon the Prophet and his surviving companions. In the battle of Badr fell Khunais, son of Huzaifa, and the faithful Omar's daughter Hafsa was left a widow. Omar offered her to Osman and Abu Bakr in turn, and she was at last married to the Holy Prophet in the third year of the Hijra.

Obaida, son of Harith, fell a martyr at Badr, and his widow Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima, was taken in marriage by the Prophet in the same year. In the next year, Abu Salama died, and his widow Um-Salama was taken to wife by the Prophet. As Christian criticism lays too much stress upon the Holy Prophet's marriage with Zainab daughter of Jahsh, a full explanation of the events in connection with this marriage is necessary:

Zainab was the daughter of the Prophet's own aunt she was one of the early converts to Islam, and the Holy Prophet proposed to her brother that she should be given in marriage to Zaid, his adopted son and freedman. Both brother and sister were averse to this match and only yielded under pressure from the Holy Prophet. It is related, that they both desired that the Holy Prophet himself should marry Zainab[1], but the Prophet insisted that she should accept Zaid.

The marriage was, however, not a happy one. Zainab was harsh of temper, and she never liked Zaid, on account of the stigma of slavery which attached to his name. Differences arose, and Zaid expressed a desire to the Holy Prophet of divorcing Zainab. The news was grievous to the Prophet, for it was he who had insisted upon the marriage, and he therefore advised Zaid not to divorce her. He feared that people would object, that a marriage which had been arranged by the Prophet, was unsuccessful. It is to this circumstance, that the verse in the Koran 33: 37 refers: "And, you feared men, and God had a greater right that you should fear Him"[2].

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(1) Al Razi; Abul Fida; Ibn Athir.

(2) On the other hand, an end had to be put to the old custom of the Arabs' condemning a man's marriage with a woman who was once wedded to his adopted son. In the same chapter "Al-Ahzab", God banned Muslims from adopting children and giving them their own names. Those children should be called after their fathers' names. Hence, the Koran's verse.

Let us now revert to Sir William Muirs view of the character of the Prophet.

**Conviction of Special Providence**: "Proceeding now to consider the religious and prophetical character of Mohammed, the first point which strikes the biographer is his constant and vivid sense of a special and all pervading providence. This conviction molded his thoughts and designs, from the minutest actions in private and social life to the grand conception, that he was destined to be the reformer of his people and of all Arabia. He never entered a company but he sat down and rose up with the mention of the Lord. When the first-fruits of the season were brought to him, he would kiss them, place them upon his eyes and say: 'Lord'! As Thou hast shown us the first, show unto us likewise the last'. In trouble and affliction, as well as in prosperity and joy, he ever saw and humbly acknowledged the hand of God. A fixed persuasion that every incident, small and great, is ordained by the divine will, led to the strong expressions of predestination which abound in the Koran. It is the Lord Who turneth the hearts of mankind; and alike, faith in the believer and disbelief in the infidel, are the result of the divine faith. The hour and place of every man's death, as all other events in his life, are established by the same decree; and the timid believer might in vain seek to avert the stroke by shunning the field of battle. But this persuasion was far removed from the belief in a blind and inexorable fate; for Mohammed held the progress of events in the divine hand to be amenable to the influence of prayer. He was not slow to attribute the conversion of a scoffer, like Omar, or the removal of an impending misfortune (as the deliverance of Medina from the Confederate hosts), to the effect of his own earnest petitions to the Lord".

**Unwavering steadfastness at Mecca**: "The growth in the mind of Mohammad of the conviction, that he was appointed to be the Prophet and Reformer, is intimately connected with his belief in a special providence embracing the spiritual as well as material world; and out of that conviction arose the confidence that the Almighty would crown his mission with success. While still at Mecca, there is no reason to doubt that the questionings and aspirations of his inner soul were regarded by him as proceeding directly from God. The light which gradually illuminated his mind with knowledge of the divine unity and perfections,

and of the duties and destiny of man, - light amidst gross darkness - must have emanated from the same source; and He Who in His own good pleasure had thus begun the work, would surely carry it through to a successful ending. What was Mohammad himself, but an instrument in the hand of the Great Worker? Such, no doubt, were the thoughts which strengthened him, alone and unsupported, to brave for many weary years the taunts and persecution of a whole people in estimating the signal moral courage, thus displayed, it must not be overlooked that for what is ordinarily termed physical courage Mohammad was not remarkable."

"It may be doubted whether he ever engaged personally in active conflict on the battle fields. Though he often accompanied forces, he never himself led them into action, or exposed his person to an avoidable danger. And there were occasions, which he showed symptoms of a faint heart. Yet even so, only brings out in higher relief, the singular display of moral daring. Let us for a moment look to the period when a ban is proclaimed at Mecca against all citizens, whether professed converts or not, who espoused his cause or ventured to protect him; and when along with these, he was shut up in the 'Shi'b' quarter of Abu Talib, and these for three years, without prospect or relief, endured want and hardship. Strong and steadfast must have been the motives which enable him, amidst such opposition and apparent hopelessness of success to maintain his principles unshaken. No sooner was he released from is restraint than, despairing of his native city, he went forth solitary and unaided to Tayef, and there summoned its rulers and inhabitants to repentance, with the message which he said he had from his Lord; on the third day he was driven out of town with ignominy, while blood flowed from wounds inflicted on him by the populace. Retiring to a little distance, he poured forth his complaint to God, and then returned to Mecca, there to resume the same outwardly hopeless cause, with the same high confidence in its ultimate success. We search in vain through the pages of profane history for a parallel to the struggle, in which for thirteen years the Prophet of Arabia, in the face of discouragement and threats, rejection and persecution, retained thus his faith unwavering, preached repentance, and denounced God's wrath against his godless fellow-citizens. Surrounded by a little band of faithful men and women, he met insults, menaces, and danger with a lofty and patient trust in the future. And when at last the promise of safety came from a distant quarter, he calmly waited until his

followers had all departed, and then disappeared from amongst an ungrateful and rebellious people."

"Not less marked was the firm front and unchanging faith in eventual victory which at Medina bore him through seven years of mortal conflict with his native city; and enabled him, sometimes even under defeat, and while his influence and authority were yet limited and precarious, even in the city of his adoption, to speak and to act in the constant and undoubted expectation of victory."

**Denunciation of Polytheism and Idolatry:** "From the earliest period of his religious convictions, the Unity, or the idea of One Great Being guiding with almighty power and wisdom all creation, and yet infinitely above it, gained a thorough possession of his mind. Polytheism and idolatry at variance with this grand principle were indignantly condemned, as leveling the Creator with the creature. On one occasion alone did Mohammad swerve from this position, when he admitted that the goddesses of Mecca might be adored as a medium of approach to God(1). But the inconsistency was soon perceived; and Mohammad at once retraced his steps. Never before, nor afterwards, did the Prophet deviate from the stern denunciation of idolatry".

**Earnestness and honesty of Mohammad at Mecca**: "As he was himself subject to convictions thus deep and powerful, it will readily be conceived that his exhortations were distinguished by a corresponding strength and cogency. Master of eloquence, his language was cast in the purest and most persuasive style of Arabian oratory. His fine poetical genius exhausted the imagery of nature in the illustration of spiritual truths; and a vivid imagination enabled him to bring before his people the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, the joys of believers, in Paradise, and the agonies of lost spirits in Hell, as close and impending realities. In ordinary address, his speech was slow distinct, and emphatic; but when he preached, his eyes would redden, his voice rise high and loud, and his whole frame agitate with passion, even as if he were warning the people of an enemy, about to fall on them the next morning or that very night".

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(1) This is a great mistake on the part of the biographer caused by a misconception of the peculiar verse of the Koran which refers exclusively to the heathen's own conviction of the successful intercession of their idols.

**His disposition**: "When Ayesha was questioned about Mohammad, she used to say: 'He was a man just such as yourselves; he laughed often and smiled much'. If he had the choice between two matters, he would always choose the easier, so that no sin accrued therefrom. He never took revenge, excepting where the honor of God was concerned. When angry with any person, he would say: 'What hath taken such a one that he should soil his forehead in the dust."

**Humility**: "His humility was shown by his riding upon asses, by his accepting the invitation even of slaves, and when mounted, by his taking another behind him. He would say: 'I sit at meals as a servant doth, and I eat like a servant, for I really am a servant;' and he would sit as one that was ready to rise. He discouraged supererogatory fasting, and works of mortification. He hated nothing more than lying; and whenever he knew that any of his followers had erred in this respect, he would hold himself aloof from them, until he was assured of their repentance."

**Attitude at Prayers**: "He used to stand for such a length of time at prayer that his legs would swell. When remonstrated with, he said: 'What shall I not behave as a thankful servant should?" He never yawned at prayer. When he sneezed, he did so with a subdued voice, covering his face. At funerals he never rode; he would remain silent on such occasions, as if conversing with himself so that the people used to think he was holding communication with the dead."[1]

The following are abstracts of Washington Irving's account of the characteristics of the Prophet Mohammad[2].

His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination, and an inventive genius. His ordinary discourse was grave and sententious, abounding with those aphorisms and epilogues, so popular among the Arabs; at times, he was excited and eloquent, and his eloquence was aided by a voice musical and sonorous.

He was sober and abstemious in his diet, and a rigorous observer of

(1) Sir William Muir's The Life of Mohamed.

(2) Life of Mohammed by Washington Irvin (Bell and Daldy London 1864).

facts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel or the ostentation of a petty mind, and neither was his simplicity in dress affected, but the result of a real disregard to distinction from so trivial a source. His garments were sometimes of wool, sometimes of the striped cotton of Yemen, and were often patched. He forbade the wearing of clothes entirely of silk; but permitted a mixture of thread and silk.

He was scrupulous as to personal cleanliness, and observed frequent ablutions. In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them and listened to their complaints. He was naturally irritable, but had brought his temper under great control, so that even in the self-indulgent intercourse of domestic life, he was kind and tolerant. 'I served him from the time I was eight years old', said his servant Anas, "and he never scolded me for anything though things were spoiled by me."

## THE REAL MOTIVES OF THE PROPHET

W. Irving, seeking to discover the real motives of 'Mohammed', 'in giving himself for a prophet of God', put the following questions, which he himself answered:

"Was it riches? His marriage with Khadija had already made him wealthy, and for years preceding his 'pretended vision', he had manifested no desire to increase his store. Was it distinction? He already stood high in his native place, as a man of intelligence and probity. He was of the illustrious tribe of Quraish, and of the most honored branch of that tribe. Was it power? The guardianship of the Kaaba, and with it the command of the sacred city, had been for generations in his immediate family, and his situation and circumstances entitled him to look forward with confidence to that exalted trust. In attempting to subvert the faith, in which he had been brought up, he struck at the root of all these vantages. On that faith were founded the fortunes and dignities of his family. To assail it, must draw on himself the hostility of his kindred, the indignation of his fellow-citizens and the horror and odium of all his countrymen who were worshippers of the Kaaba."

"Was there anything brilliant in the outset of his prophetic career to repay him for these sacrifices, and to lure him on? On the contrary, it was begun in doubt and secrecy. For years it was not attended by any material success. In proportion as he made known his doctrines and proclaimed his revelations, they subjected him to ridicule, scorn, obloquy, and finally to an inveterate persecution, which ruined the fortunes of himself and his friends and compelled some of his family and followers to take refuge in a foreign land; obliged him to hide from sight in his native city, and finally drove him forth a fugitive, to seek an uncertain home elsewhere. Why should he persist for years in a course of 'imposture' which was thus prostrating all his worldly fortunes, at a time of life when it was too late to build up a new?"

"He was forty years of age before he first preached his doctrines. He suffered year after year to steal away, before he promulgated them outside of his own family. When he fled from Mecca, thirteen years had elapsed from the announcement of his mission, and from being a wealthy merchant, he had sunk to be a ruined fugitive. When he reached Medina, he had no idea of the worldly power that awaited him; his only thought was to build a humble mosque where he might preach; and his only hope, that he might be suffered to preach with impunity."

"His military triumphs awakened neither pride nor vainglory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect were shown him. If he aimed at universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, he used it without ostentation, and he took no step to perpetuate it in his family."

"The riches which poured in upon him from tribute and the spoils of war were expended in promoting the victories of the faith; and in relieving the poor among its votaries; insomuch that his treasury was often drained of its last coin. Omar Ibn Al Hareth declares that 'Mohammed' at his death, did not leave a golden dinar nor a silver dirham, a slave nor a slave-girl, nor anything but his gray mule Daldal,

his arms and the ground which he bestowed upon his wives, his children, and the poor."

"It is this perfect abnegation of self, connected with this apparently heartfelt piety, running throughout the various phases of his fortune, which perplex one in forming a just estimate of "Mahomet's" character. However he betrayed the alloy of earth after he had worldly power at his command, the early aspirations of his spirit continually returned and bore him above all earthly things. Prayer, that vital duty of Islamism, and that infallible purifier of the soul, was his constant practice, 'Trust in God', was his comfort and support in times of trial and despondency. On the clemency of God, we are told, he reposed all his hopes of supernal happiness. Ayesha relates that on one occasion she inquired of him, 'Oh prophet, do none enter Paradise but through God's mercy? ''None, none, none,' replied he, with earnest and emphatic repetition 'But you, oh prophet, will not you enter except through His compassion?' Then 'Mahomet' put his hand upon his head and replied three times, with great solemnity, 'Neither shall I enter Paradise, unless God cover me with His mercy'."

'When he hung over the deathbed of his infant son Ibrahim, resignation to the will of God was exhibited in his conduct under his keenest of afflictions; and the hope of soon rejoining his child in Paradise was his consolation. When he followed him to the grave, he invoked his spirit, in the awful examination of the tomb, to hold fast to the foundations of the faith, the unity of God, and his own mission as a prophet. Even in his own dying hour, when there could be no longer a worldly motive for deceit, he still breathed the same religious devotion, and the same belief as his apostolic mission. The last words that trembled on his lips ejaculated a trust of soon entering into blissful companionship with the prophets who had gone before him."(1)

## ATTACKS OF CHRISTIAN DIVINES AGAINST THE PRIVATE CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET

The manner, in which Christian divines have attacked the private

(1) Sir William Irving's Life of 'Mohamet' (Bell & Daldy, London) 1.200.

character of the prophet, is indeed very surprising. They seem to reject the sacred mission of the Prophet Mohammed merely on account of his polygamous marriages etc., when yet they receive as inspired the sayings of Balaam, David or Solomon. Missionaries should not, as a rule, attack the character of Mohammad.

If the prophetic mission of Mohammad should be rejected by ministers of the church on account of his having had nine wives and two concubines, why should not they raise the same objection against such of the Old Testament prophets whose number of wives and concubines had by far exceeded that number?

David had six wives and numerous concubines (2 sam. v. 13; 1 Chron. iii, 1-9; xiv. 3); Solomon as many as 700 wives and as many as 300 concubines, (Kings xi. 3). Rehoboam had 18 wives and 61 concubines (2 Chron. xi. 21), a plurality expressly forbidden to the sovereign of Israel, who was commanded not to multiply wives to himself (Deut. xvii. 17).

Honestly speaking, prejudice and partiality alone reign over all the writings of Christian missionaries, when they deal with the person and character of Holy Prophet.

The mere fact that the Prophet Mohammad entered into polygamous relationships, should not be made the pretext for attacks on his unsullied character, vouched for by friends and foes alike. The circumstances, connected with the marriages of the Prophet must be taken into consideration, in order to come to a right conclusion. As already stated[1], he passed his adult days with an elderly widow and did not condescend to enter into another wedlock, even though the Mecca elders gladly agreed to place the most beauteous damsel of the wealthiest family at his disposal. However, later on, in the declining years of his life, he married a number of wives who, with the solitary exception of Ayesha, were either widows or divorced women. These facts, viewed in the light of the truth that the Prophet passed his days in preaching and actively pushing the cause of his new faith, and his nights in prayer, and that the Prophet was universally believed to be an honest man, endowed with all the

(1) Vide pp. 68-70 of the present work.

qualities of moral greatness and all the attributes of virtuous manliness, bring home the conviction to every sound mind, that sensuality as a motive of action, is conspicuous by its absence in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Each of his marriages brought a world of social and political good to the Muslim community, and these marriages were a valuable instrument in welding together the contending factions of Arabia into a united community. Had polygamy, allowed by the Prophet under reasonable restraints and limitations, been a social bane, as some prejudiced critics try to assert, it would have hampered the moral elevation of the corrupted Arabs. But with the adoption of Islam as a moral code the moral improvement grew apace, and the transformation wrought in the moral condition of Arabia, is without a parallel in the history of the World.

## THE SOCIAL CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE PROPHET

Dealing with the social changes brought about by the Prophet, Dr. Noldeke states[1] "One fact among others, by which we can estimate the striking impression the Prophet produced upon the Arabs, is that as each tribe submitted or adopted his religion, it renounced the right of retaliation for the bloodshed in the struggle. Under other circumstances this renunciation of blood-revenge or of wergild at least, would have seemed to the Arab the lowest depth of humiliation. This was, indeed, so striking a feature of the new brotherhood that it could not fail to make a silent but deep impression upon the unbelieving multitude that now began to feel the power of the new religion."

"To those who seek miracles, this glorious result, achieved in less than a decade, constitutes a real and splendid miracle of Islam, which alone gives it the title, to be ranked as a great religion and a wonderful civilizing agency. In an exquisitely beautiful passage, full of grace and wisdom, the Holy Koran draws a contrast between the life and manners of Arabs in the shade of Islam and those in pre-Islamic times; and urges upon the true believers a true union of hearts, and dwells on the real

(1) Dr. Noldeke's Book on Islam.

purpose of the advent of the new religion. Here is a translation of the verses:

> *"O ye believers, fear God as He deserveth to be feared and die not but as true Muslims and hold ye fast by the cord of God, all of you, and do not scatter yourselves, and remember God's goodness towards you, have that when you were enemies, He united your hearts, and through His grace, ye became brethren, and when ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, He drew you back from it; thus clearly God showeth His signs, that ye may be guided. And let there be among you a people who invite to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid wrong: and these are they who shall succeed. And be ye not like those who have broken into divisions and fallen into variance, after the clear proofs have come to them; and for those waits a terrible chastisement."*
> *(Koran: 3: 102-105)*

## THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WROUGHT BY THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

"Islam", writes Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, "is a form of pure theism, simpler and more austere than the theism of most forms of modern Christianity[1], lofty in the conception of the relation of man to God, and noble in its doctrine of the duty of man to the lower creatures. There is little in it of superstition[2], less of complexity of dogmas: it is exacting religion without the repulsiveness of asceticism; severe but not merciless."

"Nothing in fact is more odious, according to the doctrines of Islam, than the self-inflicted and voluntary penance of the ascetics. It always recommends the cultivation of the social virtues and the practice of those qualities which form the graces of corporate life. Islam laid the foundations of a social system which breathes the spirit of charity, friendship, and mutual trust among its members. So impressively did the Prophet bring these high lessons home to the Arab mind, both by

(1) In fact there is not to be found such a pure theism in any other religion than Islam.
(2) There is not the slightest superstition in Islam.

precepts and example, that the tribal jealousies of centuries soon became extinct, the old spirit of revenge, inherent in the nation, died away, and the hearts of the true believers were knit together in the closest bond of sympathy and fraternity. They now felt themselves as the brethren of one and the same faith, and citizens of the same commonwealth, enjoying equal rights and privileges."

"Islam penetrated into the very hearts of the Arab people, and the old spirit of jealousy and vengeance, of hostility and ill-will, yielded place to a happy consciousness of the power of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling; the very character of the Arab mind was changed, and many of the evils rooted in the nation were fast eradicated. Within the Islamic commonwealth the internecine wars, which were the cause of much wanton bloodshed, soon became a thing of the past; and hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience; and the valor which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels, was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy."(1)

## THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

When the Prophet settled at Medina, he established a commonwealth based, not upon the old basis of consanguinity but upon religion, with the Prophet himself as the chief magistrate. The spirit of blood-revenge, derived from the fiery and sensitive temper of the Arabs which was responsible for the long-protracted blood-feuds between clan and clan, waned away, and in its place there grew up in each member of the new commonealth a genuine, earnest desire to see the peace and unity of the community maintained. The sense of tribal pride and superiority lost much of its keenness; the bond of consanguinity was greatly relaxed. They were taught to reverence the new institution, planted through the Prophet, by God Himself, and to sink their tribal dissensions in the commonwealth of the brotherhood of faith.

*"O men, verily, we have created you of one male and one female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes, that ye*

(1) Vide Stanley Lane Poole's Lectures on Islam'.

*might have knowledge one of another. Truly the most worthy of honor in the sight of God is he who feareth him most. Verily, God is knowing and cognizant."*[1]

Equality of rights was thus the distinguishing feature of the Islamic commonwealth. A convert from a humbler clan enjoyed the same rights and privileges as one who belonged to the noblest Quraish. Even a slave was admitted as a brother from the very moment of his conversion, and the highest dignity in the state thought it no dishonor, to partake of his repast with him. Nor in the place of worship were suffered artificial differences between man and man: the high and the low, the prince and the peasant, the rich merchant of Mecca and the roaming Bedouin of the desert, stood shoulder to shoulder in the presence of their common Deity. This equality and fraternity was, and is even today, though much weakened, the keynote of Islam and the secret of its power as a world religion[2].

This leveling principle, underlying the tenets of the new faith, proved a veritable blessing to the Arabs in particular. Tribes and races, hitherto at war with one another, were, in the embracing fold of Islam, welded into one nation, imbued with common ideas, common aims and aspirations, and devoted to a common cause. Conflicting interests were harmonized from a loyal desire to advance the public good. The Holy Koran laid down certain principal laws, intended to govern their new relations as members of the state, to extinguish the fire of the old tribal jealousy, and to affect a union of hearts unknown before. The laws soon succeeded in bringing order out of chaos and confusion and made civic life possible for the first time in Arabia. "O believers", so run the five verses of the Koran,

> *"if any wicked man come to you with news, make a thorough inquiry, lest through ignorance ye harm a people and have to repent on the morrow of what ye have done; and know that an apostle of God is among you. Should he submit to you in most matters, ye would certainly fall into difficulty. But God hath endeared the faith to you, and hath given it favor in your hearts,*

(1) Koran, ch. 49 "The Apartments":13.
(2)Vide T.W. Arnold, 'The Preaching of Islam'.

*and hath made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. Such are they who pursue a right path, a bounty from God and a grace and God is Knowing and Wise. If two bodies of the believers are at war, then make ye peace between them with fairness and do justice; God loveth those who are just. Those who believe, are brethren; where-fore make peace between your brethren; and fear God, that ye may obtain mercy. O believers, let not a people laugh, another people to scorn who haply may be better than themselves; neither let women laugh women to scorn who haply may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by bad names. Wickedness is such a bad quality to adopt, after becoming true believers, and whoso repent not (of this) are wrongdoers. O believers, avoid frequent suspicions; verily some suspicions are a crime, and pry not into others' secrets, neither let the one of you traduce another in his absence. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would loathe it. And fear ye God, for God is ready to turn, and Merciful. O men, verily We have made you of one male, and one female, and We have made you peoples and tribes that ye might know one another. Truly, the most worthy of the honor before God is he who feareth Him most. Verily God is Knowing, Cognizant."*[(1)]

Such were the principles, on which the political system of Islam was grounded. It was thoroughly democratic in character. It recognized individual and public liberty, secured the person and property of the subjects, and fostered the growth of all civic virtues. It communicated all the privileges of the conquering class to those of the conquered who conformed to its religion, and all the protection of citizenship to those who did not. It put an end to old customs that were of immoral and criminal character. it abolished the inhuman custom of burying the infant daughters alive, and took effective measures for the suppression of the slave-traffic, it prohibited adultery and incestuous relationship; and on the other hand, inculcated purity of heart, cleanliness of body, and sobriety of life."[(2)]

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(1) Koran: ch. 49 The Apartments: 6-13.

(2) Vide Bosworth Smith, Mohammad and Mohammedanism'.

## THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF ISLAM

The Prophet Mohammad did not only promulgate a religion, but he also laid down a complete social system, containing minute regulations for a man's conduct in all circumstances of life, with due remarks and penalties, according to his fulfillment or otherwise of these rules. The social and the religious parts of Islam are so inseparably bound up that it is impossible to out off the one from the other without destroying both. Religion according to Islam should not only lay down the law of relation of man to God, but should also regulate and distinctly define the proper relation between man and his fellow-creatures.

The Holy Koran inculcates the softer virtues, such as friendliness, good temper, affability of manners, hospitality, forgiveness, fairness in dealing, regard for superiors, kind treatment of inferiors, respect for women, care of orphans, tending the sick, helping the helpless and the destitute, with a force and persuasion which is difficult to find elsewhere(1). The critics of Islam have for the most part expressed their unstinted admiration for the heroic, or sterner virtues, to wit: patient endurance, fortitude, love of truth under personal risk, courage and manly independence, which Islam has always exalted and in the practice of which the Prophet himself and the early Muslims were so marvelously distinguished; but these critics often forget that Islam enjoins with equal emphasis the cultivation of the gentler virtues too. Lessons of modesty and benevolence and charity have been so often re-iterated in the Koran, and again, these virtues form so conspicuous an element in the life and conduct of the Prophet and his companions, that Islam can justly claim to be ranked as a Religion of Love. Every chapter of the Holy Koran begins with the name of "God, the Merciful, the Compassionate".

The Prophet of Islam has been denominated in the Koran as "the tender, the compassionate", and "the mercy for the universe". Himself the tenderest and the most loving of men, he was never tired of preaching to his followers the brotherhood of man and humanity to all God's creatures. "How do you think", he asks, "God will know you when you are in His presence?" "By your love of your children, by your love of your kin, of your neighbors, of fellow-creatures." He displayed the

(1) Vide Stanley Lane Poole's Lectures on Islam.

greatest consideration for the feelings and sensibilities of others. He loved his wives, and was kind to his servants. He was particularly fond of little children and discouraged the use of the rod for their correction. He enjoined humanity even to dumb animals.

Such being the ethics of the Koran and the teachings of the Apostle of Islam, it is easy to form some idea of the exact nature and extent of the change wrought thereby in the life and thought of the Arabs. Some of the first few converts to Islam, unable to bear persecutions at the hands of the idolaters, sought refuge in Abyssinia. When asked by the Negus as to the reason why they had left their country, Jaafar, a cousin of the Prophet, spoke thus as the mouthpiece of the small band of refugees:-

> *"O King, We lived in ignorance, idolatry and unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak, we spoke untruth, violated the duties of hospitality. Then a Prophet arose, one whom we know from our youth with whose descent and conduct and good faith we are all acquainted. He told us to worship the one true God, to speak the truth, to keep good faith, to assist our relatives, to fulfill the right of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure ungodly, unrighteous and he ordered us to say prayers give alms, and to fast. We believed in him; we followed him; but our country persecuted us, tortured us and tried to cause us to forsake our religion; and know we throw ourselves upon thy protection. Wilt thou not protect us ?"*[1]

Dealing with this great spiritual revolution, Sir W. Muir observes as follows:

"Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life... Thirteen years before the 'Hijra' Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced. A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one God, and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed a revelation from Him; praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervor looking for pardon through His Mercy and striving to follow

(1) Vide Sir William Muir ch. pp. 36, 37 of this book.

after good works, alms giving, purity and justice. They now lived under the constant sense of the omnipotent power of God and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns in all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. Mohammad was minister of life to them, the source under God of their newborn hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit submission."[1]

## REFUTATION OF CERTAIN FALSE CHARGES BY PREJUDICED WRITERS AGAINST ISLAM

### 1- Force and compulsion were employed for the Dissemination of Islam"

Islam took its birth, and has since lived, in the broad daylight of history. The Muslims adhere to the faith of Islam not because they were born and bred in this faith, but because it is the most historical religion and can bear with perfect safety even the severest possible criticism.

If those who brought the above charge, had cared to deal with their subject in an honest, straightforward manner, they should have gone through the teaching of Islam, as embodied in Holy Koran, and then pondered over the fact, that the early Muslims were so much devoted to the letter, as well as the spirit of this Book, that they sacrificed everything to obedience of the junctions contained in it, and did not swerve even a hair's breadth from the path laid down in their Book. If the Book enjoined force and compulsion for the spread of Islam, then the Muslims must have fought and worked havoc for the propagation of Islam. There is not even a single verse in the Holy Koran which directly or even indirectly insinuates the alternative of death or Islam for the unbelievers. "There is no compulsion in religion" (1: 256) trumpets forth loudly the peaceful spirit of Islam. The commandment is absolutely positive and admits to no exception. The use of force and compulsion is then totally forbidden, and the imperative and highly dictatorial character of the injunction leaves no room for any chance of making an exception in

(1) Sir William Muir's "Life of Mohammed".

favor of the employment of warlike means, for the purpose of popularizing Islam. The mere fact that in the history of Islam one meets with fighting and bloodshed, can in no way lead to the conclusion that Islam was spread by the sword. There is no religion the history of which is not stained with blood. The Crusades, the Christian conquest of Spain, the subsequent persecution and expulsion of the Muslim Moors, the days of the Inquisition, the massacres of Bartholomew's day and other similar tragedies, perpetrated in the name of religion, recurring to the memory, send a new horror and dismay throughout the world.

No reasonable person will therefore be prepared to accuse the adherents of any religion, of allowing force and compulsion, on the flimsy ground that the story of such religion makes mention of bloodshed and fighting. Islam will be to blame if it can be proved that it sanctions the use of force and compulsion for the propagation of the faith. But on the contrary, we find clear and explicit injunctions forbidding force for the purpose of religion. The only possible conclusion that can be drawn from the above considerations is that if the Muslims were acting in accordance with the teachings of Islam, they did not take up arms for the sake of forcing conversions. A glance at the history of those days will bring to light the fact, that they were persecuted, and were subjected to all Sorts of torture and ill treatment. They left their homes to save their lives, but the merciless enemies followed them. At last, when all peaceful means had failed, and the aggressive spirit of their antagonists reached its zenith, the enemies having made up their mind to annihilate the embryo dispensation, the handful of Muslims were driven to have recourse to arms.

They fought and fought, till there was no danger left to retard free growth and expansion of Islam. If facts alone are looked at, there should be no difficulty in realizing the real situation of the early Muslims who had to fight for the sake of self preservation. Later on there was also a good deal of fighting, and although much of this later fighting had little to do with religion, there is certainly nothing in it to blame the Muslims for. The political development of a nation is another problem which needs careful handling and which I leave for students of politics to examine. With regard to those verses of the Holy Koran in which war is enjoined upon Muslims against the infidels and that wherever they are

found they shall be taken and killed with a general slaughter, these verses and their likes, as already stated, bear upon the defensive war of the Holy Prophet. The Muslims can produce any number of verses from the Holy Koran which enjoin all courtesy, politeness and civility, even in the case of severe persecutors. The example of the Prophet is clear on this point. He granted pardon to the Mecca persecutors when, quite vanquished they threw themselves on the mercy of the Holy Prophet.

God says:

> *"And the servants of the God of Mercy are they who walk upon the earth softly; and when the ignorant address them, reply 'Peace'; and they pass the night in the adoration of their Lord, prostrate (at times) and standing (at others) for prayers."*
> *(25: 63-64)*

I appeal to the good sense of the readers as to whether there can be found a higher ideal for humanity to pursue. God's servants are required to walk humbly and harmlessly, and when they are confronted with ignorance which is only another name for lack of manners and manly behavior, even there, when hedged round by ill manners and ill-treatment the true Muslim is called upon to wish for peace. His sole object in his social capacity should be to spread peace, even when harassed by bad behavior and inconsiderate treatment. Peace is the Muslim's watchword, whatever circumstances he has to pass through. When comparing this highly practical ideal with the Christian injunction "Love your enemy", a Muslim is constrained to admit his impression that the Christian code of morality is only a set of fair-seeming platitudes, not meant for practice, but merely for controversial purposes. It is all very well to love one's enemy, but is it, a Muslim asks, in consonance with human nature, to be able to show anything like real and true love, where there exists enmity? Our enemy, if he is an enemy at all, in the natural sense of the word, cannot be expected to feel favorably disposed, much less loving and affectionate, to us. However pious and godly we may happen to be, hatred and contempt, the necessary characteristics of enmity, must react on us, and our attitude, at best, will be supposed inactive hatred, and in no case real love. Love begets love, and hatred begets hatred. This is the law of nature, and a wise man cannot ignore the course of nature, and

frame a line of conduct conflicting straightway with it. Islam does not require us to be hypocritical lovers of our enemies, but calls upon us to be reconciled with our enemies, and to be at peace with them. Thus, removing the cause of enmity, if it is possible to do so, a Muslim should be sincerely loving. But if the cause cannot be removed, our hostilities should not be active and aggressive, for we are, in the honest discharge of our religious duties, bound to wish for peace under all circumstances and all events.

I have already stated with sufficient fullness, and need not repeat it over and over again, that Muslim wars, as allowed in the Koran and explained by the sayings of the Prophet, were entirely defensive, and therefore the attacks recommended are never aggressive. The religion of Islam is essentially for peace, and even in fighting the aim was nothing but peace.[1]

The defensive wars of the early Muslims are a matter of history. It is a historical truth, and no reasonable person can refuse to accept it. After thirteen long years of persistent persecution, when all peaceful measures had failed and proved unavailing, when war or death were the only alternatives, it would not have been right to act upon the Gospel verdict "Love your enemies and do good to them to that hate you", and thus to allow the enemies of Islam to revel in the wholesale massacre of harmless worshippers of the one true God, and to sweep the only living faith out of existence. Muslims who were bent upon the preservation of their beloved faith at all hazards, Muslims who loved God above all worldly considerations, even their very lives, Muslims who were by all sorts of ruthless tortures and merciless butcheries, goaded by natural anger, so far kept down by the peaceful ordinances of Islam, could not of course adopt the 'love your enemy" maxim as their guide. The enemy of God and his blessed dispensation which preaches love, peace and fellow-feeling, can scarcely be expected to deserve real love at the hand of a sincere lover of God. A Muslim cannot afford to love an enemy who hates God. He cannot go against human nature. His ideal will be peace, he refuses to play the aggressive part, and he takes the initiative in the reconciliation and shows sincere love thereafter. A zealous enthusiastic Muslim writer makes the following remarks on the attitude of Christian

(1) Vide T.W. Arnold 'The Preaching of Islam'.

critics who lay great stress on the defensive wars of the Holy Prophet, as follows:

"Our Christian friends love to conceal facts while dealing with Islam. They are prepared to dwell upon the defensive wars of the Prophet and his holy followers, but they take good care to keep us away from what Jesus is reported to have said with positive definiteness: '*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword*'.

Again we read:

'*I am come to send fire upon the earth and what will I if it be already kindled.*' We read again in the Gospel: '*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division.*' Once more we read in the Gospel: '*Then said he unto them, but now he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.*' It is now as clear as the day, that if Jesus had had the opportunity of gaining political strength, he would have filled the earth with war and bloodshed, notwithstanding his saying 'Love your enemy'. Peace is the thing a Muslim is called upon to maintain by whatever means he can; but peace, according to the above statements attributed to Jesus, is the very thing Christ came to destroy."[1]

Instead of the Christian commandment, 'Resist not evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' the Muslims follow their Koranic verdict, to wit: "Ward off evil in the best possible manner."[2]

If evil is not to be resisted, it would be allowed to grow unchecked, and eat away the very vitals of humanity. All goals, reformatory schools, and law courts should be abolished forthwith, so that under the charitable teachings of the Christian faith, evil may have perfect freedom and run riot in whatever way it can. When it is a sin to resist evil, the natural consequence is the abject toleration, or rather encouragement, of all sorts of nefarious designs and mischievous courses. Human nature is not safe under the assumed Christian teachings; therefore it naturally revolts against them. Never has mankind, even in the very heart of civilization

(1) Quazi Abdul Haque, 'The Review of Religion' (Sept. 1913)
(2) Koran (64 : 16).

which is said to be the direct result of Christian teachings, acted upon these teachings which are against the intellect, nature and instincts of humanity. The Holy Koran strikes at the very root of evil. It stops the very source of it. It says: "Ward off evil in the best possible manner." The measure to be taken for the removal of evil is not positive nonresistance which is not a sensible policy at all, but on the contrary the most effective methods ought to be used for the extirpation of evil. The means suited to particular cases are to be employed, whether they be harsh or mild. Whatever is productive of desirable results should be resorted to for the eradication of evil.

**2- Mohammedanism: A Religion of Sex-Indulgence**

As regards the assertion that Islam is a religion of sex indulgence, nothing can be farther from the truth. A comparison of the moral conditions of the countries, populated by Muslims and Christians respectively, will clearly show that the number of illegitimate births is alarmingly greater in Christian than in Muslim countries. The honor of the fair sex is more in jeopardy in the former than elsewhere, and the freedom of the softer sex is nowhere so cruelly abused and insulted as in Christian lands. Islam enjoins upon its followers to live and act under a constant sense of the fear of God. Whatever a Muslim does, he does it God-fearingly. Fear of God is the prevailing passion with a Muslim, and governing all his thoughts, words, and actions. Even conjugal relations and connubial dealings, fear of God is the main motive of actions.

I give, below, in extense, the nuptial sermon, universally preached on the occasion of marriage, in imitation of the Holy Prophet:

> *"O ye believers! Fear God as He deserves to be feared, and die not without having become Muslims. O men, fear your Lord Who hath created you of one progenitor, and of the same species created He his wife, and from these twain hath spread abroad so many men and women. And fear ye God, in Whose name ye ask mutual favors, and reverence the wombs that bore you. Verily, God is watching over you. O believers, fear God and speak with well-guided speech, that God may bless your doings for you and forgive you your sins. And whoso obeyeth God and His apostle, with great bliss he surely shall be blest".*

The sermon is a collection of Koranic verses, and their repetition at each and every wedding, is meant to remind the Muslim men and women of their duties and obligations. It opens with a commandment to fear God, and the self-same commandment is repeated quite a number of times in the course of the sermon, showing that the whole of the ceremony is to be carried through with fear of God so that from beginning to end it may be a pure, moral binding, and no selfish equivocation or hypocritical prevarication may mar the sanctity of the sacred rite. The obligations accepted by the pair at the time when the marriage sermon is delivered, will thus be real and will exercise a lasting influence on the future life of the couple, as man and wife. The institution, based solely on fear of God, is bound to be holy and those who hold to such a holy institution cannot be charged with sinister motives, if they are true Muslims. Such a sacred system can never be productive of sex-indulgence. A man, who God-fearingly enters into a contract and binds himself to certain obligations, cannot be termed a sexual man. The verses clearly give the Muslim to understand that the ultimate object of the marriage contract is to win the pleasure of God. When acting from such motives, it cannot be conceived that a Muslim considers himself to be pleasing God, while indulging in sensuality. Sensuality is an abomination to God, and a Muslim knows that fact from the Koran, more than anybody else it is impossible, therefore, to incur displeasure where the avowed object is to win approval. Thus it is clear that Islamic marriage makes life pure and chaste, and does not afford occasion to taunt any one with the vice of sensuality.

Whether a Muslim weds one wife or the fullest admissible number of wives, he cannot lose sight of the object of his life. He is not born for anything but the adoration of God. He turns heretic if he even for an instant, even in the moment of sexual intercourse, the moments of utmost enjoyment and therefore of utmost self-forgetfulness, banishes from his mind the purpose for which he was brought into being. Marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, is for a Muslim, the means of attaining the nearness of God."[1]

The Gospel's commandment "Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his mind,"

(1) Al Ghazali.

shows us that an evil look is forbidden; but a look having no wicked intention behind it is permitted. Muslims, however, are bound by their religion not to look repeatedly and freely at a strange woman, for the pleasure of doing so. According to human nature a woman, on account of her charms, is an object of temptation; and whoever exposes himself freely to temptation prepares the way for his moral destruction. Too much indulgence in the habit of looking freely at beauties, as it seems to be allowed according to the Gospel's text, leads to evil. The best way to guard against evil is to avoid the path that leads to temptation. The Koran forbids both pure and impure free looks; for too much recourse to pure looks is likely to prompt impure ones. To be safe, temptation must be kept at arm's length and not nourished freely to exhaust one's patience and power of resistance. The Koran's injunctions on the subject are as follows:

> *"Ask the believers to cast down their eyes and observe continence. Thus will they be more pure. Of a truth, God is well aware of what they do. And ask the believing women to refrain their looks and observe continence; and to display not their ornaments except those which are external, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and to display not their ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers or their husbands' fathers or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons or their women or their slaves or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who note not women's nakedness. And let them not strike their feet together, so as to discover their hidden ornaments. And be ye wholly turned to God, O ye believers; then it shall be well with you."*[1]

Thus, both men and women are required to refrain from unnecessarily looking at each other. The softer sex is required to walk about so carefully as not to be a stumbling block for any weakling, and therefore the social morality and individual chastity are kept intact. Promiscuous intermingling of both sexes, and the reckless display of charms on the part of the fair sex have gone a long way towards undermining the real moral tone of Christian countries.

(1) Koran: 24: 30-31.

A learned man[1], commenting on the charge that Islam stimulates sex-indulgence, writes in the Review of Religions:

"The living facts speak volumes for themselves, and no one who has had occasion to read up certain articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, can afford to question the truth of the sad state of affairs so strikingly brought to light in them. We cannot shut our eyes to the ennobling influence of the growing civilization of Europe, that civilization, with all its softening and elevating forces, has not yet been able to obviate the necessity of food, and alleviate the pressure of all cravings of nature. If, therefore, attraction of charms is a natural aptitude, as surely it is, one cannot help admitting, that unlike other natural desires, this craving of nature also remains unaffected by the advance of civilization. No amount of learning and no sort of culture and scholarship can alter human nature; and it follows, therefore, that civilization can scarcely prove a bar to the inborn desire of man for woman, and vice versa. To assert that civilized Europe is proof against the resistless onslaught of passion, is a ridiculous statement when, civilization has failed to do away with other natural desires of mankind. To give a moral lift to the Christian countries, it is necessary to introduce the Islamic moral code which pays equal attention to the intellectual, moral and social advancement of the people. But under the present circumstances, it is sad to note that Christian Europe improve the intellectual side at the sacrifice of the moral one."

### 3- Islam and Polygamy

Islam enjoins marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, as the conditions of life necessitate, with due regard to piety, so that there may be no violence to human nature; and the desire for sexual intercourse, like other cravings of nature, being duly gratified, may lead to the perfect safety and the complete security of social morality. Thus the Islamic system of marriage, harmonizing with the practical need and requirements of mankind, gains fresh luster

(1) Quazi Abdul Haque.

when brought under the searchlight of unbiased criticism. The Prophet's example in the matter of marriage is specially striking. It refutes the commonplace objection of ignorant people that it is impossible to deal fairly with more than one wife. One need not waste time and energy in discussing the practicability of monogamy or polygamy for mankind. The example of the Prophet is vivid before us. He had as many as nine wives, but how lovingly and fairly he behaved towards them, is known to all students of religion. The love he bore to each individual wife, and the consummate spirit of good will that characterized the mutual relation of the Prophet and his wives, is above the possibility of suspicion. We have the absolutely credible evidence of the wives themselves. They state him to be the embodiment of love and justice.(1) Never was there any real grievance on the part of the wives against his treatment. The Prophet with his perfect example has proved up to the hilt, that it is quite possible for a polygamous husband to maintain justice and equality of treatment among his wives, if only he has a mind to do so. When the Prophet could do perfect justice towards nine, there should be no reason why we cannot do justice towards only four, even less than half the number. The excess allowed to the Prophet does not permit him to indulge in sensuality, as certain critics would have us believe, for the Prophet's life is unsullied and above such base charges, but it is meant to show to the world how the Prophet was endowed with superhuman feeling of love and affection towards his wives. It was also intended to show the Muslims how it was within the range of possibility, to deal kindly and justly with a plurality of wives. He left no room for discussion. He acted and asked his followers to act. Polygamy must not be discarded, if it be found conductive to social happiness, on the clumsy pretext that it is impossible to live smoothly with more than one wife. The Prophet did live peacefully with nine wives, and we Muslims can also do so, under given conditions, with four wives, if we follow the noble example of the Holy Prophet in all our doings and actions. It is only when we fail to live up to the standard of the Prophet's perfect manners, that we fail to secure a peaceful and loving attitude towards a plurality of wives, nay even towards a single wife.

The natural causes that go to prove the necessity of polygamy are

(1) Ibn Athir, Abul Feda, Sir W. Muir & c. & c.

many. According to the Pioneer (Allahabad, India), infant mortality in India is always very high and there is no province where the returns are more lamentable than Bengal. In the annual report of the Sanitary Commission for 1912, it is stated that nearly 3,400 children died during the first year of their existence, this representing a loss of twenty one percent of the births. Under these conditions the only way to protect the numerical strength of the human race against the undermining effect of infantile diseases is to resort to polygamy. Heat that engenders sickness cannot be prevented; therefore it is impossible to better the climate of the hot region in this direction at least. As long as the maladies, fatal for children, cannot be effectively combated, it is unwise not to adopt another counteractive measure. If mortality cannot be reduced, the birth rate should be increased to a very high degree. The fatal influence of the sickness can be encountered by producing a large number of healthy children, so that a good number of children may survive the bad effect of the climate. This necessitates polygamy. By two or more wives one can beget more children and thus contribute to the preservation of the human race. The high number will make up for the increased death rate among the young, and keep the population from dwindling.

This is one of the many natural reasons that go to prove the necessity of polygamy.[1]

The writer takes this opportunity to point out that our critic friends have no cause to lose their temper at the mention of polygamy. **Islam does not enforce polygamy.** It enjoins marriage where no disabilities stand in the way. Monogamy is the general rule; polygamy is a provision for urgent emergencies. It is unwise to question the general wisdom of an institution in exceptional cases if a man can be content with one wife, Islam does not compel him to resort to polygamy. If Christian critics find that their way of living obviates the necessity of a plurality of wives, they are not bound to have recourse to polygamy. Let them live with one wife and refrain from reviling Islam, as Islam does not make polygamy obligatory. If they clearly understand the problem of polygamy, I hope they will come to entertain a better feeling towards the law of the Holy

(1) Physical inability on the part of a married woman to fulfill the duties of marriage is evidently a Justification of polygamy, for instance. (author).

Prophet. Islam simply permits polygamy, if one cannot live in happiness and piety with one wife. But if Christians can live piously and happily with one wife, Islam does not interfere. Islam is as much monogamous as Christianity, the difference being, that the former makes a provision for urgent needs, with due regard to the rights of the wife, whereas the latter does not. Should a man fail to find any emergency calling for a plurality of wives, let him live with one wife, and Islam will not be a bar in his way.

**Polygamy is not essential in Islam**. To consider polygamy as essential in Islam would be an unpardonable mistake. In fact, the teaching of the Koran is to the contrary, and strongly recommends monogamy, as already shown. Islam claims to be a universal religion. It was not revealed to meet the requirements of a particular race or age; with its world-wide mission, Islam had to look to the requirements of all ages, countries, and civilizations. Besides the substantial laws, the code of Islam, as every wise legislation must do, provides certain ordinances which may be looked upon as auxiliary or remedial laws, with an elasticity to meet the contingencies of place and time. It deprecates their abuses and lays down proper restrictions as to their use.

The events of the world sometimes give rise to circumstances which cause appreciable paucity in the number of men. Intertribal or international wars often lead to the same result; and leave numberless members of the weaker sex without home or protection. The great European war (1914-18) is a quite recent example of international calamity that caused an unimaginable decrease in the number of males, leaving hundreds of thousands of females without guardians or protectors. With all our refined ideas of chivalry and broadmindedness, no other institution than marriage can safely come to save the situation. Other measures under similar circumstances have been schemed and resorted to, but they could not avoid undesirable results. To maintain strict continence and piety in society, Islam would not recommend any woman to seek refuge under the roof of any man who does not stand in marital, or within the prohibited degree of relation to her. Our experience also goes far to endorse the advisability of Islamic policy in this respect. Polygamy is but a specific remedy to meet the need. But a woman has not been left without her own choice in the matter. To secure

her peace, comfort, and happiness, if she needs no other help or protection, no Muslim would compel her to marry a man who is already the husband of another woman. Thus polygamy as said before, is a sort of remedial law in Islam which may come into operation when opportunity arises, and should not be resorted to when there is no occasion for it. It is not only for connubial purposes, that equality of number in men and women is a necessity. In human life there are occasions when only men are in requisition. How to fill up the shattered ranks, if similar calamities cause the death of men? The only two resorts left are either to encourage bastardy or adopt polygamy. To recruit the number, no one having the least sense of decency would recommend the former measure. One, indeed cannot understand the wisdom of the law in the West which, practically speaking, condones what it condemns under the name of bigamy. Marriage after all is only a union of man and woman which under specified formalities received the sanction of society. Therefore, if the special circumstances of an age do demand the multiplication of units in a nation, why not legalize what has already received the sanction of practice and usage, and save thousands and thousands of souls from the ignominy of being called 'bastard' sons or daughters, and thus give them the right to inherit from those who gave them their body? It would tend to improve morality, and enhance the sacredness of nuptial rights. Thus, polygamy sometimes becomes a national necessity.

This institution has also its legitimate uses in individual cases as well. Propagation of one's species is the most important of all the purposes of marriage, and if all hopes of an issue through the first wife are at an end, there seem to be only three ways open to a man: either to divorce his wife; to deny himself the pleasure of having issue - the desire of nearly every married man - or to wait till the death of the wife, and spoil his whole life. Is not then a second contemporaneous marriage preferred to any of the above alternatives? A man may do it and save heart-burnings, if he is strongly attached to his first wife. The case of Napoleon presents a good illustration. He had to divorce, his well-beloved wife Josephine, a lady possessing virtues and abilities of a very high order. There was the warmest attachment between the two, but Napoleon could not issue from her, and the country therefore insisted upon her divorce. The account of her divorce, as related by historians and biographers, is extremely pathetic. Napoleon married another wife, he reigned splendidly and

enjoyed the benefits of a prosperous kingdom; then came calamities upon him, which continued until his death. Josephine had been divorced, but their love for each other underwent no change. She remembered him with ardent love and sympathy in his troubles and calamities as in the days of happiness. But the strong cord which bound them together had snapped asunder. If polygamy had been allowed and this was, I say, one of the rare occasions where the jurists of Islam have sanctioned polygamy, Napoleon and his widow would not have suffered this extreme affliction. Muslim ladies have often allowed their husbands in such cases to take another wife and beget an issue.[(1)]

Of course, those who indulge in polygamy without obvious reasons are not acting in accordance with the spirit of their religion. Islam placed the institution under restrictions which gradually came to be a most efficacious check to polygamy. The best check indeed has been provided in the very verse of the Koran which is held to authorize polygamy:

> *"Then marry what good you of women, two, three or four (wives); but if ye fear that shall not act equitably, then one (wife) only"* [(2)].

In this verse the license given to polygamy is curtailed by a provision which enjoins strict equity and justice towards all wives as obligatory on man. In case a man feared that he could not act equitably and justly between his wives, he was directed be content with one wife only. The word 'fear' in the verse deserves special notice; that is to say, if a man is afraid that he will not be able to comply with the provision, he must not go beyond one wife. And it need hardly be pointed out, how difficult it is to give every one his (or her) own just due; nor is every one able to do it. Nay, the Book of God itself admits in another verse the inability of man, to observe the required equality of treatment in every respect to all of his wives, and thus emphasizes the desirability of having only one wife; but suggests, at the same time, a very wise course to those who under unavoidable circumstances have been compelled to have more than one wife. The verse is as follows:

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(1) 'Muslim Home' by H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum Sahiba, Ruler Bhopal, India.
(2) Koran:4: 3.

*"And ye can never act equitably between women, although ye covet (it); but turn not with all partiality (towards one of them) nor leave the other like one who is in suspense; but if ye be reconciled, and fear (to do wrong), verily God is Forgiving, Compassionate."* (1)

**Again:**

*"And if a wife fears ill-usage or aversion from her husband, it shall be no crime in them both that they should be reconciled among themselves with some reconciliation; for reconciliation is best. And souls are prone to avarice; but if ye be good and God-fearing, verily God knows what ye do."*(2)

It will thus be clear from the above instructions that when a man has married two wives in the belief that he is able to treat them equitably, and he then finds that he is inclined towards the one to a degree amounting to aversion against the other, and is prepared to divorce one of his wives, the above verses lay down directions for the guidance of both man and wife, namely, that they should come to an understanding between themselves and be reconciled, the wife by foregoing some of her rights, and the man by self-control. This would save each of them the troubles attendant upon a divorce.

But the best remedy to avoid future unpleasantness lies in the hand of the woman in Islam, where marriage is a civil contract and can be saddled with adequate conditions, to violate which would in itself bring marriage to nullity. Thus, a woman who fears the possibility of a second marriage on the part of her betrothed, can make provisions against its unpleasant effects, before she is married. She may get such special damages, as are provided in the contract of marriage, when the contingency arises; she may have the option of living separately from her husband with a suitable maintenance; or get herself divorced and all shall be provided for in the contract of marriage, it being a civil contract.

"Polygamy in a word, in Islam, is a remedy. It has its uses and

(1) Koran: 4: 128.
(2) Koran: 4: 129.

abuses. Islam guards against the latter, and allows the former under restrictions and within stringent limits. More knowledge of human needs and exigencies would enlighten the world and enable it to see the necessity of allowing an institution, like polygamy, with its rare and limited use as in Islam."(1)

**Polygamy is not an institution originated by Islam.** "Now Mohammad", writes Bosworth Smith, "was a legislator and a statesman, as well as the founder of a religion and why is the defense which we allow to Solomon, and the praise we bestow upon limited scope of the Mosaic legislation, denied to Islam?

"Polygamy is, indeed, next to caste, the most blighting institution, to which a nation can become a prey. It pollutes society at the fountainhead, for the family is the source of all political, and all social virtues. Mohammed would have more than doubled the debt of gratitude the Eastern world owes to him, had he swept it away; but he could not have done so, even if he had fully seen its evil. It is not fair to represent polygamy as a part of Mohammedanism any more than it is fair to represent slavery a part of Christianity. The one co-exists with the other, without being mixed with it, even as the muddy Arve and the clear Rhone keep their currents distinct, long after they have been united in one river bed. Perhaps it is strange that they ever could have coexisted, even for a day; but we have to deal facts as they are, and it is a fact, that slavery has co-existed with Christianity, nay, has professed to justify itself by Christianity in this nineteenth century. Mohammad could not have made *tabula rasa* of Eastern society, but what he could do he did. He at least put strict limitations on the unbounded license of eastern polygamy, and the facility of Eastern divorce. If the social touchstone of a religion is the way, in which it regards the poor and the oppressed, Mohammed's religion can stand the test. He improved the condition of women by freeing them from the arbitrary patriarchal power of the parents or the heirs of husbands, by inculcating just and kind treatment of them their husbands themselves, by giving them legal rights in case of unfair treatment, and by absolutely prohibiting the incestuous marriages which were rife in the times of ignorance, and the still more horrible practice of the burying alive of female infants. Nor was this all for besides imposing restrictions on

(1) H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum Sahiba, Ruler of BhoPal, India.

polygamy, by his severe laws at first, and by the strong moral sentiment aroused by these laws afterwards, he has succeeded, down to this very day, and to a greater extent than has ever been the case elsewhere, in freeing all Mohammedan countries from those professional outcasts who live by their own misery, and by their existence as a recognized class, are a standing reproach to every member of the society, of which they form part."[1]

## THE STATUTE OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

It has been said that Islam, as a social system has been a total failure, because "it has misunderstood the relations of sexes, and by degrading women, has degraded each successive generation of their children down an increasing scale of infamy and corruption, until it seems almost impossible to reach a lower depth of vice". This is certainly strong language and calls for an investigation, as to whether Islam has really misunderstood the relation of the sexes, and whether it has really degraded women.

Very few of the critics take pains to determine what actually the teachings of Islam are in this respect, as embodied in the Holy Koran; and fewer still is the number of these who care to study the life of the Prophet, which is the most authentic commentary on the text of the Holy Book. It is therefore most regrettable that misconception should have arisen about the status of women in Islam, a point on which the attitude of Islam is clear and unmistakable. I am afraid many in Europe and in America form such strange opinions from a study of the tales of romance or books of traveling, written by professional globe-trotters. They see in the "harem", which is by the way a name in the East for the ladies' apartment, a home of gross sensuality and voluptuous pleasures. Such ideas have unfortunately prevailed in the west for a very long time; and supported by the wrong interpretations that have been, put, from time to time, on certain verses of the Koran and certain sayings of the Prophet of Islam, they have a firm hold on the imagination of the critics of the West.

One of the verses of exquisite beauty which have been subject to

(1) "Mohammed and Mohammedanism by Bosworth Smith, M.A., pp. 174-176.

misconstruction in certain quarters is: "They (the wives) are a garment for you and you are a garment for them" (2: 187). It is garment that hides one's nakedness; so do husband and wife, by entering into marriage relations, secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body; so does the husband find comfort in his wife's company, as she in his. The garment is the race, the beauty, the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands, as the husbands, to them.

Another verse which has been similarly misconstrued is the verse which the Rev. Rodwell translates thus:

> *"Men are superior to women on account of the qualities, with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God hath of them been careful"*. (4:34)

From this verse several critics have drawn the erroneous inference that in Islam woman holds a very subordinate position, and that she has been placed under man's tyrannical sway, she having no choice but to submit to his arbitrary dictates and self-willed decrees. Even accepting the Rev. Rodwell's translation of the verse as correct, the sense of the verse appears to be nothing more than this: that man should treat his wife with love and affection and provide for her from his abundance, while woman should reserve her honor, attend to domestic duties and look up to him as her friend, philosopher and guide. Understood thus, the verse has nothing revolting to our feelings, and describes the relationship between husband and wife as it naturally ought to be. There is nothing in the verse to imply that the wife's judgment is in any way fettered, that she is simply the slave of her husband's desires, or that she is at best an 'ornamental article of furniture'. Neither, according to respectable commentators of the Koran, does the verse admit of the meaning which superficial critics have willfully put upon it. These commentators understand the verse to point out a man's right to exercise a certain control over his wife, and his duty to provide for her security and sustenance. The superiority of man over woman rests on certain innate qualities which man generally possesses in greater proportion, in regard to knowledge and power. In power of endurance, in audacity and courage, man has a decided advantage over his fair sister. Prophets

apostles, distinguished philosophers and commanders of armies have all been, men, not women. Lecky, himself undoubtedly a clear thinker and discerning critic, while discoursing on the distinctive difference between the sexes, observes thus:

> *"Physically, men have the indisputable superiority in strength, and women in beauty. Intellectually, a certain inferiority of the female sex can hardly be denied, when we remember how almost exclusively the foremost places in every department of science, literature and art have been occupied by man... it is impossible to find a female Raphael, or a female Handel, or a female Shakespeare, or Newton."*

Lecky, however, thinks, and perhaps rightly enough, that morally the general superiority of women over men is unquestionable. Be that as it may, when once we admit the physical and intellectual superiority of man over woman, we cannot deny that woman has to depend upon, and take advantage of the intellectual resources and superior strength of the opposite sex; and this is precisely what Muslim doctors hold to be the important and significance of the verse under consideration.

Some critics made needless comments on the following saying of the Prophet:

> *"Treat women with kindness, for women were made of a rib which is crooked in the upper part; if you try to bend it straight, you will break it, and if you leave it as it is, it will remain so".*

In these words the Prophet only appeals to the good sense of man and the kindliness of his heart, by reminding him of the natural weakness of the fair sex; so that we may not expect of women things out of proportion to their talents and capabilities; for in such expectations we are likely to be disappointed, and our disappointment may tempt us to accord to them harsh treatment. The Prophet, therefore, exhorts his followers to be rather generous and forgiving than severely exacting and calculating. It is as if the Prophet said to his followers:

> *"I am giving you sound advice relative to what your treatment*

*should be towards women; carry out therefore my will respecting them. Do good to them; and be not angry with them, if they act in a way not acceptable to you, unless, of course, the deed involves any positive sin; for, they are made of a crooked rib (and, as such, are naturally liable to error).*

Elsewhere, the Prophet has positively warned us against running after scandals and constant searching after the secrets and faults of women, since such a course of action may impair the conjugal relations, and finally lead to the absolute dissolution of the marriage bond.

Close acquaintance with the teachings of Islam repudiates the false charge, that the Prophet is responsible for the degradation of woman. The Prophet saw the weak points of woman's character, as well as its strong points. He regarded woman as physically and intellectually inferior to man in general, but richer in nobler emotions of the heart, in tenderness and delicacy of feeling. Nobody can be so bold as to say, that the Prophet saw nothing good in woman, and conceived her to be a bundle of unmixed evils. He said:

*"Let not any Muslim be harsh in his treatment of his wife; for if certain aspects of her conduct displease the husband, certain others will please him".*

He neither desired that woman should be the bond-slave of her husband, nor did he countenance the idea, that woman should be so far free as to overstep her proper limits and encroach upon the sphere of her husband. On the principle of division of labor, Islam assigns to each a particular sphere of work, on the faithful discharge of which depends the happiness of hearth and home. Woman, in her capacity of a good mother and a devoted wife, is the queen of her home, while the husband is to protect her from all danger and temptation, earns his bread by the sweat of his brow in the open world and provides for the maintenance of the family. In connection with this setting apart of spheres of work with regard to the nature, constitution, mental habitude and position of the person concerned, the Prophet of Islam said:

*"All of you are so many sovereigns, and all of you will be required to render account in respect of whatever persons or*

*things you have under your charge. So the chief who is sovereign over his subjects, shall be questioned about the treatment he accorded to men placed under his control; the head of the family is the sovereign of the house and he shall be questioned with respect to the members of the house; and woman is sovereign in the house of her husband, and rules her children and shall be questioned about these, and the servant is sovereign over his master's belongings, and he shall be questioned about them".*

The ruling idea in the teachings of Islam with regard to man is that the husband and the wife supplement each other, call into play the distinctive excellence of their respective character and in mutual confidence strive to work out their united happiness. Woman is to exercise her beneficent, humanizing influence over her husband, soften the hardness of his nature and level down the stiffness of his character; while man, for his part, is to educate her mind and help her to realize those womanly qualities, in which she by her very nature excels. This is the conception of wife-hood which the Prophet of Islam favored, as is inferred from some of his sayings. "A woman is married for four reasons" said he, "either in consideration of her wealth, or her noble parentage, or her beauty, or her piety. Succeed then in getting a woman of piety for your wife, for she is to her husband a helper in life, and she remains content with little".

On another occasion he told a certain woman who had brought a complaint against her husband: "There is no woman who removes something to replace it in a proper place, with a view to decorate her husband's house, but that God sets it down as a virtue for her. Nor is there a man who walks with his wife hand in hand, but that God sets it down as a virtue for him; and if he puts his arm round her neck in love, his virtue will be increased tenfold".

Once again, he was heard praising the women of the Quraish, "because" said he, "they are the kindest to their children while they are infants and because they keep a careful watch over the belongings of their husbands".

In another instance the Prophet of Islam said: "There are four things,'

such that if a person is endowed with any one of these, it is as if the blessings of both worlds were showered upon him: first, a heart that is grateful; second a tongue that utters constantly the name of God; third, a mind that is patient and calm amid troubles; fourth, a wife that is never guilty of a breach of trust, either in respect of her own person or in respect of her husband's property".

I will now give some further sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, on the question under discussion which I hope will shed more light on the position assigned to women in Islam.

1.- "Among my followers, the best of men are they who are best to their wives, and the best of women are they who are best to their husbands... To each of such women is set down the reward equivalent to the reward of a thousand martyrs... Among my followers, again, the best of women are they who assist husbands in their work, and love them dearly for everything, save what is a transgression of God's laws. The best of men, on the other hand, are they who treat their wives with the kindness of a mother to her children. To each of such men is set down a reward equivalent to that of a hundred martyrs." On being asked by Omar, who afterwards rose to be the second Caliph, why woman's reward should be ten times greater than man's, the Prophet said: "Do know that woman deserve greater reward than man: for, verily, Almighty God exalts the position of a man in heaven, because his wife was pleased with him and prayed for him."

2.- "The best among you is he who is the kindest to his wife, and I am the kindest of you all to my wives."

3.- "What are the rights that a wife has over her husband?" asked Moawiyah;" and the Prophet forthwith replied: "Feed her when thou takest thy food; give her clothes to wear when thou wearest clothes, refrain from either giving a slap on her face or even abusing her; separate not from thy wife, save within the house."

4.- "Verily, of the believers he has the most perfect faith who has the best manners and shows the greatest kindness to his wife and children."

5.- "Fear God in regard to the treatment of your wives, for verily they

are your helpers. You have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful by the words of God."

6.- Once the Prophet portrayed an ideal wife in the following words: "She is the ideal wife who pleases thee when thou lookest at her, obeys thee when thou givest her direction; and protects her honor and thy property when thou art away."

7.- "The world is full of objects of joy and delight, and the best and the most profitable source of delight is a pious, chaste woman."

8.- "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

9.- "Search after knowledge is obligatory both on Muslim men and Muslim women."

**1- The Object of Marriage**

The object of marriage was defined by the Prophet in clear unambiguous words. It was never meant to be a means of satisfying the sensual appetite but, on the other hand, it was instituted in the first place, as a safeguard against lewdness and incontinence, and, in the second place, as a means of procreation. It is on these and similar grounds that he always encouraged a married life in preference to a life of celibacy, and laid so much stress on the piety and fruitfulness of women.

"Whoever marries a woman solely for her power and position," said the Prophet, "God but increases his humiliation; whoever marries a woman solely for beauty, God but increases his ugliness; but whoever marries a woman, in order that he may restrain his eyes, observe continence, and treat his relations kindly, God putteth a blessedness in her for him, and in him for her."

Thus piety and continence are uppermost in the conception of Islam, as the prime motive of marriage. This is clear enough in another saying of the Prophet. "There are three persons," said he, "whom the Almighty Himself has undertaken to help. First, he who seeks to buy his freedom; second, he who marries with a view to chastity; and third, he who fights in the cause of God."

Another saying of the Prophet equally clear on this point:

"He who marries, completes half his religion; it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of God."

That Islam viewed marriage as means of procreation and not for gratification of sensual desires, is clear from a short but pregnant saying of the Prophet: "Marry and generate." On another occasion he said; "Marry a woman who holds her husband extremely dear, and who is richly fruitful."

The Prophet advised great circumspection in the selection of the bride, and even permitted that the intended bride be seen, before her betrothal, by him who seeks her hand, lest a blunder in choice or an error of judgment should defeat the very end of marriage.

**2- Marriage and Divorce**

The laws of marriage and divorce were so framed by the Prophet that they may ensure the permanence of marriage relations without impairing individual freedom. These laws display wonderful insight into human nature, inasmuch as marriage; they never lose sight of exceptional circumstances, requiring special treatment. In the formulation of the laws of marriage and divorce, extremes have been avoided in favor of a golden mean. If, under certain circumstances, more than one wife is permitted, or dissolution of marriage is favored, it is because of the operation of the same principle of flexibility that governs the entire body of the Islamic laws. It is certain that the Islamic laws of marriage and divorce have been abused; and sometimes flouted in certain Muslim lands; but the laws themselves are not responsible for the delinquencies of the individual.

The Islamic laws have recognized women as free and responsible members of society, and have assigned to them a convenient position. A Muslim woman is entitled to a share in the patrimony along with her brothers, and though the proportion is different, the distinction is founded on a just appreciation of the relative position of brother and sister. No male member of the family, not even her husband, can manipulate her

property which during the marriage remains absolutely her own and quite at her disposal. The exigible portion of the stipulated dower is payable to her on demand, as soon as the status of marriage is established and the deferred portion on the termination of the marital relation, unless the woman is guilty of a manifest wrong. Under the Muslim law, the dower settled upon the wife, is an obligation imposed by the law on the husband, as a mark of respect for the wife, the non-specification of which, at the time of marriage, does not affect the validity of the marriage. In the event of dissolution of marriage, the husband can retain no part of the wife's property, including her ante-nuptial settlement; and, if the administration of the wife's estate was entrusted to him, he must render the wife an account of such administration. Her property is in fact jealously guarded on all sides, and no restrictions are placed on the individual right she has in her belonging. She possesses the right of dividing and alienating her property, and this right of alienation is in regard, not only to her husband but to everybody else. She can sue her husband, as she can sue her other debtors, in the open court. She does not require her husband or father, to represent her at law. She can act as an executive and can enter into any contract independently.

A Muslim wife retains her distinct individuality even after marriage, and she assumes her husband's name. Coverture has no place in the marriage of Islam.

Marriage under Islam is but a civil contract (and not a sacrament, in the sense that those who are once joined in wedlock can never be separated. It may be controlled, and under certain circumstances, dissolved by the will of the parties concerned. Public declaration is no doubt necessary, but it is not a condition of the marriage. Nor is any religious ceremony deemed absolutely essential. Two witnesses are required to attest that the contract has been concluded.(1)

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(1) The whole history of the Christian laws of marriage and divorce furnishes a very interesting and instructive reading to a Muslim jurist: for, he perceives, perhaps not without a feeling of just pride, that his Christian brethren are coming nearer to Islam, at least in their conception of marriage and the relations to which it gives rise. In all European countries, the laws relating to marriage and have been revised and recast and the changes introduced, when examined will be found to exhibit in some of their broad features, a very close analogy to the Islamic laws, framed several centuries before.=

### 3- The Guardian and the Consent of the Bride

Though the Islamic Laws recognize the consent of a woman as an indispensable element of a valid marriage, they recommend that the consent of her guardian be also taken. Muslim jurists are, no doubt, divided in their opinions, as to whether the consent of the bride's guardian is essential, but they all agree in holding that a woman who is sui juris can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent. According to the Hanafi Islamic School of Law, the capacity of a woman who is adult and of sound mind, to contract herself in marriage is absolute. The same school explicitly lays down that 'a woman who is adult and of sound mind may be married by virtue of her own consent, although the contract may not have been made or exceeded to by her guardian, and this whether she be a virgin, or a *Thayyiba*[1]. On the same principle, the marriage of an adult woman under compulsion has been held to be invalid. It is related on good authority, that an adult woman who was married by her father to a man against her will, came and spoke about it to the Prophet who declared the marriage void. According to the Hanafi School also, the marriage of a minor under compulsion of her father or grand-father, holds good, on the assumption that a marriage thus contracted is, *prima facie*, in the best interests of the child, and therefore she cannot cancel the contract of marriage when she arrives at her full age, unless there be good grounds for such a step. If, however she was given in marriage by a guardian other than her father or grand-father, she can exercise, if she like, 'the option of puberty', and ask the Court to aside the marriage.

=Thus, in Germany, for instance, the code of 1900 recognizes civil marriages alone. 'It is effected by the declaration of the parties before a Registrar, in the presence of each other, of their intention to be married. Two witnesses of full age must be present. The Registrar asks each of the parties whether he or she will marry the other, and on their answer in the affirmative, declares them duly married, and enters them in the register. The marriage must be preceded by a public notice.' Dissolution of marriage has long been recognized in Germany and the United States of America, In England, divorces were very rare till 1857, When the powers exercised in matrimonial matters by the house of Lords, the Ecclesiastical Courts of Common Law were transferred to a lay court termed, 'The Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes', and constituted for the administration of all matters with divorce. In France, a similar Change came about in the year 1884. In Italy divorces are still almost unknown.

(1) A girl who is not a virgin, whether a widow or a divorced woman.

It is clear, then, that under the Hanafi School of law, a marriage can be contracted with or without a guardian, provided the girl is adult, and has given her consent to the contract.

The Shafei and the Maleki Schools of law, on the other hand, maintain that a maiden cannot personally consent to her marriage. According to them, the Wali's (the guardian's) consent, in the case of a maiden, is one of the essential factors of marriage, though not in the case of a 'Thayyiba'. The distinction seems to have been derived from the idea that a thayyiba's judgment is naturally more reliable than a virgin's, and that she is expected to understand better the nature of the marriage contract. In support of their view they refer to the tradition, related by Ayesha, that the Prophet said that the contract of marriage is absolutely void, if a woman enters into such without the consent of her guardian.

The great majority of the girls being quite innocent of the nature of the contract, it is therefore necessary that the guardian of the girl should intervene and protect her from being duped by interested persons, or from the evil consequences likely to flow from the choice of the girl, when injudicious or against her own interest.

### 4- The Inequality of the Two Sexes with regard to Divorce

Marriage being regarded as a civil contract and as such not indissoluble, the Islamic law naturally recognizes the right in both the parties, to dissolve the contract under certain given circumstances. Divorce, is then, a natural corollary to the conception of marriage as a contract and it is regrettable that it should have furnished European critics a handle for attack. Even Sale, that eminent scholar, has fallen into the same error; for he too seems to entertain the view, that the Islamic law permits a man to repudiate his wife "even on the slightest disgust."[1] Whether the law permits or favors repudiation on the slightest disgust, we shall presently see. But as to the other point raised by the same learned critic, namely; the inequality of the two sexes in regard to the right of obtaining a divorce, one has to remember that this inequality is more seeming than real. The theory of marriage, no doubt, points to a

(1) G. Sale's Prelim. Disc, to his translation of the Koran. Sec. vi.

subordination of the wife to her husband, because of her comparative inferiority in discretionary powers; but in practice the hands of the husbands are fettered in more ways than one. The theoretical discretion must not be understood as giving a tacit sanction to the excesses of a brutal husband; on the other hand it is intended to guard against the possible dangers of an imperfect judgment. The relations between the members of the opposite sexes which marriage legalizes are, however, so subtle and delicate, and require such constant adjustment, involving the fate and well-being of the future generations, that in their regulation the law considers it expedient to allow the voice of one partner, more or less, predominant over that of the other.(1)

Perhaps it is here worthy of notice that in Europe the two sexes are not placed on an equal footing in respect of the right to divorce. Lord Helier, P.C., K.C.B., who was President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, 1892-1905, observes on this point: "Much comment has been made on the different grounds, on which divorce is allowed to a husband and to a wife, it being necessary to prove infidelity in both cases, but a wife being compelled to show either an aggravation of that offence or an addition to it. Opinions probably will always differ whether the two sexes should be placed in equality in this respect, abstract justice being invoked, and the idea of marriage as a mere contract, pointing in one direction, and social considerations in the other. But the reason of the legislature for making the distinction is clear. It is that the wife is entitled to an absolute divorce only if her reconciliation with her husband is neither to be expected nor desired. This was no doubt the view taken by the House of Lords."(2)

### 5- Limitations of Divorce

A Muslim is not free to exercise the right of divorce "on the slightest disgust". The law has put many limitations upon the exercise of this power. Then, again, the example and precepts of the Prophet in this particular have rendered divorce most repellent to the Muslim mind. A Muslim is permitted to have recourse to divorce, provided there be ample

(1) Mohammedan Jurisprudence, page 327.
(2) The Review of Religion, April, 1913.

justification for such an extreme measure. The whole Koran expressly forbids a man to seek pretexts for divorcing his wife, so long as she remains faithful and obedient to him, "*If they (namely, women) obey you, then do not seek a way against them.*"[1] The law gives to the man primarily the faculty of dissolving the marriage, if the wife, by her indocility or her bad character, renders the married life unhappy; but in the absence of serious reasons, no Muslim can justify a divorce, either in the eyes of religion or the law. If he abandons his wife or puts her away from simple caprice, he draws upon himself the divine anger, for 'the curse of God' said the Prophet, 'rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously.'

Intrinsically, divorce is an evil, and must be regarded as such, wherever there is the least respect for the law of God and the precepts of the Prophet. The pagan Arab, before the time of the Prophet, was absolutely free to repudiate his wife or wives, whenever it suited his whim or purpose. He was not bound to offer any reasons or the exercise of the power of divorce. The mere expression of his will was enough to effect a separation. The wife was a mere plaything. Sometimes the husband would revoke the divorce and again divorce her, and again take her back, to divorce her again, and so on indefinitely. Sometimes again, she was divorced, but she was not free to marry. Women under such circumstances were in a perpetual state of suspense, as it were. At last, the Prophet, the Mercy for the Universe came. He declared divorce to be 'the most disliked of lawful things in the sight of God.' He was indeed never tired of expressing his abhorrence of divorce. Once he said: 'God created not anything on the face of the earth Which He loveth more than the act of manumission nor did He create anything on the face of the earth which He detesteth more than the act of divorce.' On another occasion he said: "Forbidden is the fragrance of paradise to her who asks for a divorce for no good reason". Such were the conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce,' and so vehemently did he protect the women against the tyranny of their husbands, that there soon grew up a general feeling among the women of the time, that the Prophet would defend their cause, whether it

(1) Koran: 4: 34. Obedience here signifies obedience to man only in matters recommended by the law of God. This significance is made clear by a comparison with Koran, 33: 31, 33; 35 and 66: 5. This verse Al Ghazali holds to mean "Seek not a pretext for separation".

be just or unjust, and that his decision would be invariably in their favor. His defense of the cause of women, and of orphans and of children, had in fact passed into a by word.

In the Holy Koran, there is a most edifying verse which is generally overlooked "Associate with the wives," so runs the verse, "with good and if ye dislike them, it may be that ye dislike a thing and God may put abundant good in it."[1] Thus the Koran enjoins forbearance, even with a wife one does not like. One really wonders at the boldness of the critics who say that the law of Islam permits divorce "even on the slightest disgust."

Many and various are the sayings of the Prophet of Islam that teach love, untiring patience forgiving disposition and, above all, fear of God in the treatment of women. "The man who bears with the ill manners of his wife," said the Prophet, "shall receive from God rewards equivalent to what the Lord gave unto Job, when he suffered his affliction; And to the woman who bears with the ill manners of her husband, God granteth rewards equivalent to what He granted to Assiyah, the wife of Pharaoh."

The great Muslim commentator, Al Ghazali, observes that divorce is allowable when the object is not to trouble the wife by divorcing her without just grounds, as refractory or unseemly behavior on her part, or extreme necessity on the part of the husband.

It is clear, then, that Islam discourages divorce in principle, and permits it only when it has become altogether impossible for the parties, to live together in peace and harmony. It avoids, therefore, greater evil by choosing the lesser one, and opens a way for the parties to seek agreeable companions and, thus, to accommodate themselves more comfortably in their new homes.

For, under Islam, a divorced woman, like the husband who divorces her, acquires the right of marrying any person she likes, the moment the separation is recognized by the law[2].

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(1) Koran (4 : 19).

(2)With Christians the case is not so: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery". Matt v:32.

Fully recognizing the evils that arise from divorce, the Prophet of Islam took very cautious steps in framing the laws; and the ruling idea seems to be, that divorce should be permitted only when marriage fails in its effects, and the parties cease to fulfill the duties that spring from the marriage relation. There is in fact no justification for permanently yoking together two hostile souls, who might make themselves quite comfortable in new homes, if they were permitted to effect a separation. To compel them to live together "in pursuance of a most vexatious law under a yoke of the heaviest slavery - for such is marriage without love - would indeed be a hardship crueler than any divorce whatever. God, therefore, gave laws of divorce, in their proper use, most equitable and human". For, most appalling consequences sometimes follow, unless divorce is permitted where it is desirable. Justinian the great Roman emperor, had to repeal the prohibition of his predecessor on divorce by mutual consent, despite the opposition of the clergy, and the ground stated by the enactment was, that it was difficult "to reconcile those who once came to hate each other and who, if compelled to live together, frequently attempted each other's life". "He yielded writes Gibbon, "to the prayers of his unhappy subjects, and restored the liberty of divorce by mutual consent, the civilians were unanimous, the theologians were divided, and the ambiguous word[1] which contains the precepts of Christ, is flexible to an interpretation that the wisdom of a legislation can demand."[2]

## 6- Islam's Suggestion for Reconciliation

A careful study of the laws of the Koran which relate to marriage and divorce will show that the spirit of the verses unmistakably points to a prevention of divorce, and that everywhere reconciliation is recommended in the most appealing terms. Before the parties proceed to the extremity of divorce for unavoidable reasons, it is expressly laid down, that all lawful means be adopted for avoiding a breach; and it is only in the event of their failure that a separation is permitted, of course, as a last recourse. Under such extreme circumstances, divorce is not merely permissible, but has been held quite expedient, and recourse to it is recommended, in spite of deterrents, like poverty. It is believed, God

(1) St. Matt. v. 32.

(2) A Treatise on Christian Doctrines by J. Milton.

himself opens out many a way for those whose intentions are honest: "And if they separate, God will make them richer out of his abundance, for God is Extensive and Wise."[1] It is interesting to note that very nearly the same idea is expressed in the Koran where those who are single are exhorted to marry. "Marry those who are single among you and such as are honest of your men-servants and your maid- servants; if they be poor God will enrich them of His abundance."[2] It follows, then, that according to the Islamic laws, divorce, under certain circumstances is as necessary as marriage.

The directions of the Koran in respect of the adoption of the courses that tend to make reconciliation possible are as explicit as they are full of wisdom. Thus, in the chapter of women, we read:

> *"Virtuous, women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God hath of them been careful. But those, for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear, chide, remove them into beds apart, and chastise them, but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them: verily God is High and Great. And if ye fear a breach between husband and wife, send a judge out of his family, and a judge out of her family; if they are desirous of agreement, God will effect a reconciliation between them; for God is Knowing and Apprised of all."*[3]

If a woman is chaste and mindful of her duties as wife, the Islamic law makes it obligatory upon the husband to associate with her on the best of terms, and with kindness and courtesy. But, if she proves refractory in her behavior, the law confers on the husband the power of correction if exercised in moderation."[4]

The drift and tone of the verses quoted above, point to the desirability

(1) Koran: 4 :129.

(2) Koran: 24:,32.

(3) Koran:4: 33, 34.

(4) The law of England similarly vested in the husband the right of chastising his wife for levity of conduct, "and the husband in quite recent times, was allowed to restrain her personal liberty, but his right so to do first expressly negative by decision of the Court of Appeal in the year 1891". Holland's Jurisprudence, page 240.

of exercising the power of correction in three degrees. He may begin with a reprimand, if her conduct calls for such. Then, if she still remains rebellious, he may banish her from his bed for a few days. If this also proves unavailing, he may next beat his wife, but not so as to cause her real injury, for he is not allowed to use violence, even under extreme provocation. In the event of the failure of all these expedients, divorce need not follow, but a resort to arbitrators is advised, each party being represented by a member of his or her family. The arbitrators after hearing both sides shall endeavor by all possible means to bring about reconciliation. If their efforts prove unsuccessful, they may grant repudiation, when empowered by both parties to do so.

The Holy Prophet, who no doubt understood the import of the Koranic verses better than anybody else, is reported to have said:

> *"Feed thy wife as thou feedest thyself, clothe her as thou clothest thyself, strike her not on her face, separate not from her, except within the house; but if she persists in her refractoriness... begin with admonitions, and awaken in her the fear of God the Most High; if she does not submit, banish her from thy bed, and converse not with her for three days; if she still refuses to mend her manners, beat her but not as to leave any mark on her person, as would be the case if a rod were used: for the object is to correct her, and not to destroy her. Should this course fail to mend matters, let the case be referred to two Muslim arbitrators, free and just, one chosen from the family of each of the parties; and they shall see whether in that particular case reconciliation or separation is desirable; and their decision shall be binding upon them both."*[1]

When, however, the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband, the wife is certainly not given the power of correction, but then, she is empowered by the Islamic law to obtain a divorce, if she so desires. Before the advent of Islam, neither the Jews nor the Arabs recognized the right of divorce for women: and it was the Holy Koran that, for the first time in the history of Arabia, gave this great privilege to

(1) "Gunyat al Talibeen ch: Manners of Marriage".

women. And, at the same time, it must be remembered, the spirit of the Koran is opposed to an indiscriminate exercise of this privilege. The Prophet warned women, not to play the hypocrite, and men are advised in the most emphatic terms, to refrain from seeking a breach, where a little moderation on their part, may perhaps do away with the difference. I give below some of the verses of the Holy Koran, and the reader will see how they ask us to make allowances for the frailties, to which our human nature is prone, and in what manner reconciliation is recommended. It is impossible to read the verses without being impressed with their appealing tone and graceful simplicity. *"And if a woman"*, so runs the fine verse, *"fears ill usage or aversion, on the part of her husband, it shall be no fault in them, if they can agree with mutual agreement; for agreement is best*[1]*. Souls are prone to avarice*[2]*, but if ye act kindly and fear God, then verily your actions are not unnoticed by God. And ye will not have it all in your power to treat your wives alike, even though you fain would do so; but yield not wholly to disinclination, so that ye leave one of them, as it were, in suspense; but if ye come to an understanding, and fear God, verily God is Forgiving and Merciful; but if they separate, God can compensate both out of His abundance, for God is Vast and Wise."*[3]

We have seen, then, that divorce is permissible in Islam only in cases of extreme emergency. When all efforts for effecting a reconciliation have failed, the parties may proceed to a dissolution of the marriage by "Talaq" or by "Kholaa"[4]. When the proposal of divorce proceeds from the husband, it is called "Talaq", and when it takes effect at the instance of the wife it is called "Kholaa".

Under many systems of law, divorce was certainly permitted, but it could not be revoked. But the Islam legislator, while he permitted divorce, recognized under certain circumstances, the right of return to the

(1) To wit, agreement is better than separation, better than ill usage and better than aversion. (Razi Commentary).

(2) "Avarice" here implies whatever is an impediment to reconciliation. On the part of the wife it takes the form of an uncompromising attitude and a tenacious insistence on her rights which may prevent a meeting halfway; and as applied to the husband, it means unwillingness to associate with the wife for ugliness of her features or old age, or other like causes (Razi Commentary).

(3) Koran: 4, 127-129.

(4)There is a third way, also called "Mubarat", which is divorce by mutual consent.

husband. This privilege, in the infancy of Islam, was indefinitely exercised, and often abused to the detriment of women, until the Prophet received revelations, setting limits to the act of divorce, and forbidding wanton cruelty to wives, by keeping them in suspense for an indefinite period(1).

*"You may divorce your wives, and then either retain them with humanity, or dismiss them with kindness."*(2)

*"When ye divorce women, and the time for sending them is come, either retain them with generosity, or put them away with generosity; but retain them not by constraint so as to be unjust towards them. He who doth so, indeed injures himself."*(3)

### 7- The Form of Separation - A Check on Separation

The Holy Prophet imposed certain conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce that while, on the one hand, they served as a powerful check on the injudicious and arbitrary use of this power, they afforded, on the other hand, many opportunities to the parties for an amicable agreement if they so desired. Of the several forms of divorce recognized by Islamic law, the one that bears the impress of the Holy Prophet's sanction and approval is the "Ahsan" type of "Talaq"(4). This form of repudiation involves the following conditions, each of which being intended to prevent breach:

a) The husband, in the first place, must pronounce only one repudiation, the object of this limitation being, that he may

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(1) A man divorced his wife, took her back, when the period of retirement was coining to an end, again divorced her, saying "By God, I will neither accept thee, nor allow thee freedom to marry another." So God revealed the verse: "You may divorce your wives. etc." (Malik's Mowattaa).

**Again:**

"Men used to divorce their wives, and take them back, not because they intended to retain them, but because they wanted to tease their wives by putting off the divorce indefinitely; so God revealed the verse: "Retain them not by constraint etc." (Malik's Mowattaa).

(2) Koran: 2: 229.

(3) Koran: 2: 231.

(4) Ehyiaa.el-Uloum, by Ghazali.

subsequently, when better sense prevails, revoke the repudiation - if he has pronounced it from caprice or in a moment of excitement - within the wife's retirement consequent upon that repudiation and that, he may remarry her, if the period expires without the right of return having been exercised by the husband.[1]

b) The repudiation must be pronounced when the wife is in a state of purity, and there is no bar to sexual intercourse, it being declared unlawful to pronounce repudiation when the wife is in menses, or when she is pure, but has not already been approached.[2]

c) The husband must abstain from connubial intercourse with his wife after pronouncing for the period of three months.[3]

There is a tradition of accepted authenticity that throws considerable light on the wisdom underlying the last two restrictions. Abdullah Ibn Omar divorced his wife while she was in her menses; and the matter was reported to the Prophet who, much exasperated at the levity of his conduct, said:

> *"Let him take her back and retain her; till she be pure and again have her courses and again gets pure. Then, if he thinks it prudent, let him divorce her, but he should do so when she is clean and has not been approached; and this is the period of retirement (Iddat) which God has ordered for divorce."*

Some learned commentators observe in connection with this tradition that the purpose of this condition is, to avoid a rash and hasty procedure on the part of husband, through aversion arising from the wife's impurity, and, by fixing a long period of abstinence, to give him opportunities to reconsider his decision about the divorce, so that perchance he may repent, and exercise the right of return before the expiry of the term.

(1) Fatawi Moughiri.
(2) Ehylaa-el-Uloum, by Ghazali.
(3) These three months constitute the 'Iddat' period which is obligatory on such wives with whom the marriage has been consummated. "The women who are divorced shall wait concerning themselves until they have courses thrice". Koran: 2: 228.

During this period of probation, the marriage subsists between the parties, and the husband retains his marital authority over his wife. He may, therefore, have access to the wife even without her permission, and can treat her as his wife, but this would actually amount to his exercising the right of return. During 'Iddat', the husband is under legal obligation to lodge the wife in his house, though in a separate apartment, and maintain her. The laws of the Koran are quite clear on this point.

> *"O Prophet, when ye do divorce women, divorce them at their appointed time, and compute the term exactly, and fear God your Lord. Oblige them not to go out of their apartments, nor allow them to depart, unless they be guilty of manifest lewdness."*[1]

> *"House the divorced, as ye house yourselves, according to your means, and distress them not, by reducing them to straits. And if they are pregnant, then be at charges for them, till they are delivered of their burden; and if they suckle your children, then pay them their recompense and consult among yourselves, generously."*[2]

If the husband has pronounced one, or even two repudiations, and if within the prescribed period, he abstains from intercourse with his wife, and does not exercise the right of return on the repudiated wife, he loses the power of recantation at the expiration of the term, and complete cessation of the marital rights and duties takes place, a fresh marriage being necessary for the parties to reunite.[3]

It is obvious, that the very spirit of the prescribed traditional form of repudiation is towards a revocation of the divorce and reconciliation between the parties concerned. If, however, the parties fail to take advantage of the prescribed interim and are determined to break from each other, the husband may pronounce the repudiation for the third time and thus dissolve the marriage definitely. The divorced wife is forthwith rendered unlawful to him, and he cannot remarry her, unless the wife marries first another person by a valid and binding contract, is divorced

(1) Koran: 65: 1.
(2) Koran: 65: 6.
(3) Koran: 2: 232.

by this person, after a *bona fide* consummation of marriage, and completes the period of 'Iddat' consequent upon such repudiation.[1]

This severe condition has been the subject of much comment by the critics; but they forget that the very existence of such a condition demonstrates most strongly that the principles of Islam are entirely opposed to the alleged facility of divorce. The object of laying down such a rule was to prevent a definite dissolution of marriage by appealing to the sense of honor of the people.

"Sautayra and Sedillot agree with the Mohammadan jurists, in thinking that this rule was framed with the object of restraining the frequency of divorce in Arabia. Sedillot speaks of the condition as a 'very wise one,' as it rendered separation more rare, by imposing a check on its frequent practice among the Hebrews and the Heathen Arabs of the Peninsula. Sautayra says that the check was intended to control a jealous, sensitive, but half cultured race, by appealing to their sense of honor."[2]

Sir W. Muir erroneously thinks that Islam positively sanctions the hiring of a temporary husband, to legalize remarriage with a wife.[3] The idea of getting the divorced wife married to a third person, then get divorced from him, to return to her former husband, was condemned by the Prophet in the most emphatic terms.

In the other form of divorce, three repudiations are pronounced in the period of purity, either on one occasion or on three separate occasions. This divorce is valid, but is an act of sin. This form of divorce is called "Talaq Bid-a", i.e. not in conformity with pious practice.

It is to be remembered that the abuses, likely to arise from the laxity of the laws, may conveniently be counteracted by other lawful impositions. The wife or her guardian, for instance, may stipulate, at the time of marriage, against the arbitrary exercise of the power of divorce by the husband. The right of dissolution of the contract may be stipulated to be with the wife, instead of with the husband, if necessary. The same

(1) Koran: 2: 230.
(2) Personal Law of the Mohamniarjans p. 335.
(3) Sir. Wm. Muir's 'Life of Mahomet' Vol. II. p. 349.

object may also be achieved indirectly, by fixing the dower at a large sum, beyond the means of the husband to liquidate. The wife may also, by stipulation, reserve to herself the power of dissolving the marriage under certain legitimate circumstances, for example, if the husband marries a second wife.

In the event of a divorce, the Islamic laws are very particular in providing for the protection of the wife's property against the avarice of the husband. If the divorce is due to a cause imputable to the husband, he has to make over to her all her property, and pay off the dower that had been settled upon her. If, however, the divorce has been resorted to at the instance of the wife, without any justifiable cause, she has simply to abandon her claim to the dower. "The wife thus occupies," observes Sayed Ameer Ali, "a decidedly more advantageous position than the husband."

**8- "Kholaa" Divorce**

"Kholaa divorce is defined thus: When married parties disagree and are apprehensive that they cannot observe the bounds prescribed by the divine laws, that is, cannot perform the duties imposed on them by the conjugal relationship, the woman can release herself from the tie, by giving up some property in return, in consideration of which the husband is to give her a 'Kholaa', and when they have done this, an irreversible divorce would take place."

"Kholaa" is therefore a repudiation with consent, and at the instance of the wife, in which she agrees to give a consideration to the husband for her release from the marriage tie. But if the wife fails to pay the compensation, there is yet another means to dissolve the marriage, namely, "Mubarat", according to which no compensation has to be paid, and a complete separation is effected, merely by mutual consent of the parties. If, however, the husband gives a "Kholaa" to his wife without any compensation, the respective claims of husband and wife are not cancelled forthwith, and they are quite competent to sue each other for the payment of any debts which may be due.

The compensation is a matter of arrangement between the husband

and wife. The wife may return the whole, or a portion of the dower, if it has been paid; or she may simply surrender her dower or other rights, such as the right to maintenance and lodging the "iddat" period, or she may make any other agreement for the benefit of the husband such as for instance, to nurse their child during its two years of suckling or to keep and maintain the child for a fixed period, at her own expense after having weaned it.

It should be remembered that the distinction between "talaq" and "kholaa" is real and not merely technical. If the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband, or if he alone wishes for a "talaq", he must pay off the settlement debt to the wife. But, in case the proposal for a divorce emanates from the wife, because of her aversion to the husband, and her consequent failure to perform her duties as a wife, or if she alone wishes for a "kholaa", she has to surrender her dower or abandon some of her rights, as compensation. If the wife be so unfortunate as to be subject to abuse by a brutal husband who may wish her either to forfeit the whole of her dower, or live with him, she need not forfeit the whole of her dower. Let her only go to the judge, prefer a complaint against her husband and demand a formal separation by the decree of the court. If her allegations are true, the judge will call upon the husband to repudiate her. In case he refuses to do so, the judge himself pronounces a repudiation which will operate as a valid repudiation, and the husband will be liable for the whole of the deferred dower. This procedure is known as "Tafriq", or legal separation, in the Mohammadan law, and is based on the words of the Prophet: "If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken off."(1)

The first "kholaa" case in Islam is quoted by Bukhari in the following words: The wife of Thabit-ibn-Qais came to the Prophet and said 'O Messenger of God, I am not angry with Thabet of his temper or religion; but I am afraid that something may happen to me contrary to Islam, on which account I wish to be separated from him.' The Prophet said: "Will you give back to Thabit the garden which he gave to you as your settlement?" She said 'Yes.' Then the Prophet said to Thabit, "Take your garden and divorce her at once."(2)

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(1) Bukhari's Conmentary.

(2) Bukhari is the greatest commentary of Mohammadan orthodox traditions.

This tradition clearly tells us that Thabit was blameless, and that the proposal for separation emanated from the wife who feared she would not be able to observe the bounds set by God namely not to perform her functions as a wife. The Prophet here permitted the woman to release herself by returning to the husband the ante-nuptial settlement, as compensation for the release granted to her.

In the "kholaa" form, the basic principle of repudiation is, that the husband is lawfully entitled to compensation, only when he is not at all responsible for the breach - neither wholly nor in part, - but when the wife is alone responsible, as in the tradition quoted above.

Muslim jurists are all agreed, that the compensation extorted from an innocent wife is unlawful. Compensation is absolutely unlawful for the husband, even when the wife happens to be partly responsible for the disagreement. The Muslim religion is the only one that can produce a set of laws which jealously protects the property and person of a wife against her "husband's cupidity and tyranny."

Now to advert to a passage in the Koran that expressly forbids the husband to resort to cruelty or other violent means with a view to compel a woman to enter into "kholaa" and relinquish her dowry.

> *"O believers, it is not allowed you to be heirs of your wives against their will; nor to imprison them*[1]*, in order to take from them a part of the dowry you gave them, unless they have been guilty of manifest crime; but associate kindly with them; for, if ye are estranged from them, haply ye are estranged from that, in Which God hath placed abundant good and if ye be desirous to exchange one wife for another and have given one of them a talent;, make no deduction from it. Would ye take it by slandering her and with manifest wrong? How, moreover, could ye take it, when one of you hath gone in unto the other, and they (the wives) have received from you a strict bond of union."*[2]

It is impossible to think of a more appealing and forcible exhortation

(1) Sometimes the phrase is interpreted, "Do not hinder them from marrying others".
(2) Koran: 4: 18.

to a husband, to deal kindly with his wife, even if she happens to be a woman of unseemly manners. It is forbidden in the strongest terms, to lay hold on her property in the event of a separation.

Before these verses were revealed, brutal husbands used to maltreat their wives, and even to imprison and torture them until, unable to bear their sufferings, they were forced to relinquish the dowry settled upon them at marriage; and this property they used to endow their new wives with. This was expressly forbidden by the verses quoted above.

According to the Malikite Muslim School of law, if a husband has forced his wife to enter into a "kholaa", the wife is entitled to get back the dowry, but the separation will be valid in law.

I have already made mention of the procedure known as "Tafriq", which legally means dissolution of the status of marriage by a judicial decree. I give here some of the causes, for which a wife can demand a divorce by authority of the court. It must be remembered that, where the wife has the right to prefer a claim of "tafriq", the husband is entitled to no compensation as he is so entitled in "Kholaa". A divorce may be granted by the Court for:

(1) Habitual ill-treatment of the wife.
(2) Non-fulfillment of the terms of the marriage contract.
(3) Insanity.
(4) Incurable incompetence.
(5) Quitting the conjugal domicile without making provision for the wife.
(6) Any other similar causes which in the opinion of the Court justify a divorce.

We have seen, then, the position of woman and her legal status in Islam. To sum up, in the words of Sayed Ameer Ali: "Her legal status is decidedly superior to that of European women. The social immunities she enjoys, allow the fullest exercise, on her part, of the powers and privileges which the law gives to her. She acts, if sui juris, in all matters which relate to herself and to her own property, in her own individual right without the intervention of husband or father. She appoints her own

attorney, and delegates to him all the powers she herself possesses. She enters into valid contracts with her husband and her male relations, on a footing of equality. If she is ill-treated, she has the right to have the marriage tie dissolved. She is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a creed different to that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observances. Her ante-nuptial settlement is her own by absolute right, and she can deal with it according to her own will and pleasure. To become entitled to its enjoyment, she requires no intermediaries, trustees or next of kin. When she is aggrieved by her husband, she has the right to sue him in her individual capacity."

It is both interesting and instructive to compare this extract with another, from the writings of J.S. Mill, which gives us an idea of the corresponding position of women in Christianity: "We are continually told" says he, "that civilization and Christianity have restored to woman her just rights. Meanwhile, the wife is the actual bond-servant of her husband; no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slaves commonly so-called. She vows a life-long obedience to him at the altar, and is held to it all through her life by law. Casuists may say that the obligation of obedience stops short of participation in crime, but it certainly extends to everything else. She can do no act whatever, but by his permission, at least, tacit. She can acquire no property, but for him; the instant it becomes hers, even if by inheritance, it becomes *ipso facto* his. In this respect the wife's position under the Common Law of England is worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries; by the Roman law, for example, a slave might have peculium, which to a certain extent, the law guaranteed him for his exclusive use."(1)

**9- Female Seclusion**

The Islamic laws regulating the social intercourse of the Muslims have often given rise to needless criticism in Europe. In their enthusiasm for social liberty, the Western critics say that these laws are degrading to Muslim women, and are responsible for the low state of morality among

(1) The Review of Religions, May 1913. Evidently J.S. Mitt wrote prior to the Married Women's Property Act, of 1882.

Muslims. However, the true fact is that these laws, strict as they are, had for their very aim the preservation of good morals in society. Indeed, preservation of good morals and not unrestricted freedom of social intercourse among men and women - such as is prevalent today in Christian Europe - is the intention of the Islamic laws. Female seclusion is misunderstood in many quarters in foreign countries, for the apparent reason that sanctions of religion and usage have not been kept apart, as they ought to have been, but have been grossly mixed one with another. Failing to distinguish between the two, our Western critics have fallen into the very serious fault of disseminating a false notion among their countrymen that Islam is responsible for the seclusion of females, and for all the evils that flow therefrom.

I will dwell on the subject a little, and make an attempt to show whether the religion of Islam actually sanctions the seclusion of women, as is misunderstood by European critics.

The following verse occurs in the Koran, touching on our present subject:

> *"Speak unto the female believers that they restrain their eyes, and keep themselves from immodest action; and that they display not their charms and ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who distinguish not women's nakedness. And let them not strike their feet together, so as to discover their hidden ornaments, And be ye all turned to God, O ye believers, that it may be well with you."*[1]

The chief object of these verses is to secure greater purity of heart and increased chastity of mind; and hence the believers are here reminded that God is well aware of what they do, and that it shall be well for them, if they constantly turn to Him. To attain this moral purity, the believing man is first directed to restrain his eyes and observe continence. Then the believing woman is likewise directed to cover her

(1) Koran: 24: 31.

person and ornaments from public view, to restrain her eyes and observe continence. A Muslim woman is at liberty to go out of her house, if necessary, after she has obtained permission from her husband or guardian. Only, she has to take good care to dress herself properly, so as to cover her person from head to foot, and to walk in the street with restrained eyes.

It is needless to point out, that the injunction with respect to looking down is useless and uncalled for, if the women are never to walk abroad. Likewise the reference to external ornaments, too, becomes pointless, if women are to appear only before persons mentioned in the verses quoted above. It is allowable for a woman to uncover her face, and her hands, and her feet, when she feels the necessity of going out. The rest of the body must be concealed before strangers, but before the persons enumerated in the verses, it is enough that the part from breast to knee remains covered.

It is clear then, that the verse quoted above deals with propriety of dress, and forbid women to flirt and coquet, in order to gain admirers. On the other hand, it enjoins upon the faithful women modesty of deportment, purity of heart, and fear of God.

It can be confidently asserted, that the excellent teachings upon chastity, together with the remedies for incontinence, as contained in the Holy Koran, are a peculiarity of Islam. One particular point deserves special attention. The natural inclination of man is to sexual desire, over which he cannot have full control, except by undergoing a thorough transformation. The divine injunction in this respect is, therefore, not that we may look at strange women and their beauty and ornaments, or their gait and dancing, so long as we do it with pure looks, not that it is lawful for us to listen to their sweet songs, or to the stories of their love and beauty, provided it is done with a pure heart; but that it is never lawful for us, to cast glances at them, whether to lust or otherwise, and to listen to their voices, whether with a pure or an impure heart. We are forbidden to do an act, in the doing of which we are not treading upon sure ground. If the eyes are accustomed to look after strange women, there is a fear, lest this practice should, sometime, lead to dangerous consequences. The Word of God, as revealed in the Holy Koran, therefore, restrains the

carnal desires of man, and enjoins upon him, to avoid the occasions, where there is danger of the excitement of the evil passions.

We now advert to another passage in the Holy Book, where the 'mothers of the faithful' are thus addressed:

> *"O Wives of the Prophet, ye are not as other women. If ye fear God, be not too complaisant of speech, lest the man of unhealthy heart should lust after you, but speak with discreet speech. And abide still in your houses, and go not in public, decked as was common in the days of ignorance, but observe prayer and give alms, and obey God and the Apostle: God but desireth to put away all impurity from you, O ye the household of the Prophet, and purify you thoroughly. And study what is rehearsed to you in your houses, of the Book of God, and of Wisdom: God is Keen- sighted and All Cognizant."*[1]

The wives of the Prophet, who were destined to be patterns for all faithful women, are here given positive injunctions, to fear God, purify their hearts, observe prayer, give alms, obey the Prophet, and study the Holy Koran, in short, to lead a life of purity, devotion, and piety. In the sublimity of their thoughts, these noble women were not unmindful of the humbler duties of domestic life. The great lesson which their noble husband taught was that woman's proper sphere is her house, and the claims of domestic duties should receive her first and best consideration. He set up an ideal before his wives, and through them, to all believing women: it was the ideal of plain living and high thinking.

It is to be remembered, that the wives of the Prophet were all accessible to religious inquiries. Ayesha was, as it were, the repository of the traditions, and was frequently consulted on matters of religion and ritual. Men came from distant parts of the country and straightway saw the wives of the Prophet, and all of these visitors were certainly not of blameless character. It was quite natural, that the wives of the Prophet should have received guidance with regard to general deportment and propriety of speech. By "discreet speech", in the above quoted verse, is

(1) Koran: 33: 32-34.

meant that the wives of the Prophet should speak to these religious inquirers, as mothers would do to their sons.

The next verse, to which we would like to allude, is called the verse of the veil, and it occurs further on in the same chapter: *"And when ye i.e. the believers, would ask any gift of his wives, ask it from behind a veil. Purer will this be for your hearts and for theirs."*[1]

According to some commentators, strangers may approach the wives of the Prophet, and talk to them, if they are veiled; and presumably this applies to the generality of Muslim women as well. Aiming, as it does, at the purification of the heart, the verse only forbids too familiar an intercourse between strangers and the wives of the Prophet. It does not warrant the conclusion, that the Koranic laws are responsible for the immurement of the fair sex.

There are other commentators, who follow a stricter interpretation of the verse, namely, that the wives of the Prophet were here commended not to appear before strangers, even though they were veiled. Those who uphold this interpretation are careful to limit the applications of the verse to the Prophet's wives only. "If any other Muslim woman appears before a stranger, she commits no fault; but if she does not appear at all, it is better still."[2]

The occasion of this verse, in accordance with one version, also lends support to the view, that the verse was intended for the wives of the Prophet alone. Omar, who afterwards was elevated to the Caliphate, once happened to come upon the wives of the Prophet, who were still sitting in a mosque in company with many other women. Such a sight was not to Omar's liking, for he was always in favor of the seclusion of the Prophet's wives. He there and then exclaimed, "What a happy thing it would have been, if the 'mothers of the faithful'[3] had been under veils." In that case, thought he, their superiority would have been established over other women, much in the same way as the superiority of their noble husband is established over other men.[4]

(1) Koran: 33: 53.
(2) Zamakhshari's Commentary of The Koran.
(3) Thus were the wives of the Prophet termed in the Koran.
(4) Zamakhshari p. 1141.

In studying these verses, many forget to take into account the circumstances and conditions that prevailed in those times in Arab Society. A sort of chivalrous spirit doubtlessly existed; but it existed in Arab poetry, rather than in the actual life of the people. Women were no better than cattle and furniture. Free women, as well as slave women, freely walked in the open, with their heads bare, and often with scanty clothing. The houses were not large enough, and the rooms were narrow and few in number. In most cases, one and the same room served many different purposes. It is easy to see, therefore, that violation of privacy, and even of decency, was an every day occurrence. It was to put a stop to such an undesirable state of things, that the following teachings were revealed:

> *"O ye who believe, enter not into other houses than your own, until ye have asked leave, and have saluted the family thereof; this is better for you: haply Ye will bear this in mind."*
>
> *"And if ye find no one therein, then enter it not, till leave be given you; and if it be said unto you, 'Go ye back', then go ye back. This will be more pure for you, and God knoweth what ye do."*
>
> *"There shall be no harm in your entering houses, in which no one dwelleth. God knoweth that which ye discover and that which ye conceal."*[1]

Commentators mention a significant tradition about a person who, after the revelation of these verses, inquired of the Prophet, if it were necessary for him to get permission even from his mother, before entering into her chamber. "Yes," said the Prophet. "But she has none to attend to her, except myself," put in the Arab inquirer. "Likest thou to see your mother naked?" observed the Prophet. "Certainly not," replied the man. "Ask her permission then," said the Prophet emphatically.

Likewise, we find that, at certain times of the day, even domestics and children should not come into our presence without notice. Here are the instructions bearing on the occasion:

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(1) Koran: 24: 27-29.

*"O ye who believe, let your slaves and those of you who have not come of age, ask leave of you, three times a day, ere they come into your presence; before morning prayer, and when ye lay aside your garments at mid-day, and after the night prayer. These are three times of privacy. No blame shall attach to you or to them, if after these times, when ye go your rounds of attendance on one another to come in without permission. Thus doth God make clear to you His signs; and God is Knowing, Wise. And when your children come of age, let them ask leave to come into your presence, as they who were before them, asked it."*[1]

Under such circumstances and conditions Arab society grew. The influence of Islam was a blessing to the Arab race. It was Islam that awakened in the Arab mind respect for women, and a high sense of decency, and social decorum. It was only an extension of the laws of decency and social decorum, when too close intercourse between strangers and the Prophet's wives was forbidden, as we have seen in the verse of the veil. It is really to be much regretted, that the critics of Islam will not see all this, and should obstinately ascribe the framing of all these healthy rules, to motives of selfish jealousy.

There is one more verse, in the same chapter, to which reference may be made in this connection:

*"O Prophet, speak unto thy wives, and thy daughters, and the wives of the true believers, that they cast their outer garments over them (when they walk abroad; this will be more proper, that they may be known to be matrons of reputation, and may not be affronted by unseemly words or actions): God is Gracious and Merciful".*

The purport of this verse is quite clear, and requires no elucidation. The wives of the Prophet, as well as the wives of the faithful, are permitted to go abroad, if necessary, and they are required to cover themselves with large wrappers. The object of this qualification, as briefly indicated in the verse, may be best understood by a reference to

(1) Koran: 24: 57-58.

the fact, that before the revelation of. this verse, both the free women, as well as the slave women, used to go abroad, without any wrappers on, and with their heads bare; and wicked men very often affronted them in the streets, if in the case of a free woman, any altercation ensued, these men were ready with their explanation that they took them for slave women. The free women were, therefore, commanded by this verse, to cover themselves with wrappers, when they walked out of doors, so that they might easily be distinguished from slave women, and thus be safe from the insolence of street men. Nor was the wrapper, a mere mark of their social states, it was a mark of their chastity as well. For, by using large wrappers, and thereby covering the bodies, including the faces, which it is not at all obligatory to cover, they bore a silent, but strong testimony to their moral purity, and inspired awe, even in the tainted hearts of wicked people.

The Koranic verses are very clear on this point, and leave little room for doubt leaving aside the difference of interpretation, two facts stand out in bold relief:

1. That the object of the verses is to secure chastity of heart and mind, and purity of looks for man and woman.

2. That the verses actually forbid an unrestrained and promiscuous mingling of both sexes and this in the interest of good morals and social wellbeing.

Islam does not compel a woman to remain within her house under all circumstances. It permits her to go out, whenever there arises any legitimate necessity for her to go out. It is certain, that she has to take permission, either express or implicit, from her husband. There are, however, occasions when the husband cannot deny his wife such permission, as for example, when she intends to acquaint herself with the opinion of the learned on any matter affecting herself, or to visit her sick parents, etc.

As regards attending public prayers, there is nothing to prevent women from doing so under certain reservations, but it is preferable that they should pray at home. "It is more meritorious," said the Prophet,

"that a woman should say her prayers in the courtyard of her house, rather than in the mosque; it is more meritorious that she should say her prayers within the house, rather than in the courtyard: and better still, in her closet, rather than in her house; and all this with a view to conceal her from public view."

I hope that I have succeeded in presenting the correct teaching in accordance with the Islamic laws, in regard to the question of female seclusion.

It can be emphatically asserted, that Islam never favors woman's seclusion in any extravagant form. Seclusion or the Islamic veil system is defined as throwing a wrapper over the body from head to foot, and it is clear, that in this sense, it is not incompatible with a woman's stepping beyond the threshold of the house, particularly when occasion demands, and when she obtains the consent of her husband or guardian. Certain restrictions have, doubtless, been imposed on the freedom of her movements, as we have shown above. But this is due as much to moral considerations as to the fact, which has been so often ignored, that woman's proper sphere of action and influence is her own house. Man, is to go abroad with a view to earn a living for himself, his wife, and children, and woman, free from such cares, is to remain at home in order to watch over the trust committed to her, and to discharge her own responsibilities, as a mother and a wife. Such is the Islamic conception of the relation between the two sexes.

# Chapter (3)

## EXPOSITION OF THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

The word Islam which literally signifies 'resignation' (to God's will), is a comprehensive name commonly applied to the religion of the followers of the Prophet Mohammad. It embodies the various sections of the Mohammedan Law which God has established for the guidance of the people, both for the worship of their Lord, and for the duties of life.

These sections are five in number, namely: Beliefs; Practical Devotion; Transactions; Moralities; and Punishments.

### *Section I. - Beliefs*

Belief embraces the six articles of the Mohammedan faith, namely:

(*a*) God; (*b*) His angels;
(*c*) His books; (*d*) His prophets;
(*e*) The day of Resurrection; (*f*) Predestination.

### *Section II. - Devotions*

Devotions are sub-divided into five articles of practice:

(*a*) Recital of the Creed; (*b*) Prayer to God;
(*c*) Paying legal alms;
(*d*) Fasting the month of Ramadan;
(*e*) Pilgrimage to the Mosque of Mecca once in a lifetime, if means allows it.

Devotions also embrace legal warfare for the defense of the religion of Islam.

### *Section III. - Transactions*

Transactions include such duties as are required between man and man, and may be divided into three sub-divisions, namely:- Contests; Nuptials; and Securities. Almost all the various sections of civil jurisprudence relating to barter, sale, agency, larceny, marriage, divorce, dower, partnership, claims etc., are embraced under those three heads.

### *Section IV. - Moralities*

Moralities embrace the consideration of all those moral excellences which are enjoined in the Koran and in the teachings of the Prophet, such as, Sincerity; Confidence in God; Humility; Resignation; Keeping worldly ambitions within bounds; Giving good counsel and advice; Contentment; Liberality; Love to God and man; Patience; Ethical instructions and rules of conduct relating to:

(1) salutations, (2) asking permission to enter a house,
(3) shaking hands, and embracing,
(4) rising up, (5) sitting, sleeping and walking,
(6) sneezing and yawning, (7) laughing,
(8) names, (9) poetry and eloquence,
(10) backbiting and abuse, (11) promises,
(12) joking, (13) boasting and party spirit.

### *Section V. - Punishments*

Punishments include:
(1) penalties exacted for manslaughter or serious bodily injuries,
(2) punishment for theft by the loss of a hand,
(3) punishment for fornication and adultery: stoning for a married person, and one hundred lashes for an unmarried person,
(4) punishment for slander by eighty lashes,
(5) punishment for apostasy by death,
(6) punishment for inebriation by eighty lashes.

My object in writing this volume, however, is quite limited. It is to deal only with the first section of the religion of Islam, namely beliefs- which embrace all matters of faith.

Devotions which include all matters of practice, as well as the articles embodied in the rest of the section shall be the subjects of volume II to follow.

# DIGEST OF THE MOHAMMEDAN CREED

**The creed of Islam demands faith in the following:**

(1) God; (2) The Angels of God;
(3) The Books of God; (4) The Apostles of God;
(5) The Day of Judgment or Resurrection; (6) Predestination

**I will now deal with each of these articles separately:**

## 1. *Belief in God*

Belief in God is best represented by the following formula which every Sunni, or orthodox Muslim must profess sincerely:

God is one and has no partner; Singular, without any like Him; Uniform, having no contrary; Separate, having no equal; Ancient, having no first; Everlasting, having no end; Ever-existing, without termination; Perpetual and constant, with neither interruption nor termination; Ever qualified with the attributes of supreme greatness; nor is He bound to be determined by lapse of ages or times. But He is the Alpha and Omega (the First and the Last), and the Evident[1], and the Hidden.[2]

**What God is not**

God is not a formed body; nor a measurable substance. Neither does He resemble bodies, either in their being measurable or divisible. Neither is He a substance, nor do substances exist in Him. Neither is He an accidental form, nor do accidentals exist in Him.

He is not like anything that exists, neither does anything resemble Him. He is not determined by dimensions, nor contained within bounds; nor is He surrounded by sides; nor is He comprised within the heavens or earth. He sits upon the throne, after the manner which He Himself has described, and in that same sense which He Himself meant: it is a sitting far removed from any notion of contact, or resting upon, or local situation; but both throne itself, and whatsoever supports it, are sustained by the

(1) As to His Obvious existence.
(2) As to His reality.

goodness of His power, and are conquered by His will. He is above His throne and above all things, but so above, as at the same time not to be a whit nearer to the throne and the heaven, or farther from the earth.

God is exalted by infinite degrees above the throne, no less than He is exalted above the earth, and at the same time, He is near to everything that has a being; nay, he is nearer to men than their jugular veins, and is witness to everything: though His nearness is not like the nearness of bodies; neither is His essence like the essence of bodies. He does not exist in anything, nor does anything exist in Him; but He is too exalted, to be contained in any place, and too holy, to be determined by time; for He existed before He created time and place; and He is now as He always existed. He is also distinct from the creatures by His attributes neither is there anything besides Himself in His essence, nor is His essence in any other besides Him.

He is too holy to be subject to change, or any local motion; neither do any accidents dwell in Him, nor any contingencies befall Him; but He abides through all generations with His glorious attributes, free from all dissolution. As to the attribute of perfection, He wants no addition of perfection. As to being, He is known to exist by the apprehension of the understanding, and seen as He is by the eyes, through a favor which will be vouchsafed out of His mercy and race, to the holy in the eternal mansion, completing their joy by vision of His glorious presence.

**God's Life and Power**

God is living, powerful, mighty, omnipotent, and not liable to any defect or impotence, neither slumbering nor sleeping, nor being subject to decay or death. To Him belongs the Kingdom, the power and the might. His is the dominion and the excellence and the creation and the command. The heavens are folded in His hands, and all creatures are held within His grasp. He is the sole creator of beings and producer of things, and He is the communicator of existence, and from Him everything has its beginning. He created men and their works, and destined their maintenance, and determined their lives. Nothing that is possible, can escape His grasp, nor do the vicissitudes of things elude His power. The effects of His might are innumerable, and the objects of His knowledge infinite.

### God's Knowledge

God knows all things that can be known, and comprehends whatsoever comes to pass, from the extremities of the earth to the highest heavens. Even the weight of an atom cannot escape His knowledge, either in earth or heaven. He knows all things hidden or manifest. He knows the number of leaves of the trees, of the grains of wheat and of sand. Events past and future are known to Him. He knows what enters into the heart of man, and what he utters with his mouth. He alone, except those to whom He has revealed them, knows the invisible things. He is free from forgetfulness, negligence and error. His knowledge is internal; it is not posterior to His essence.

### God's Will

God wills those things to be that exist, and disposes of all accidents. Nothing passes in the earth or in the heavens, neither little nor much, nor small nor great, nor good nor evil, nor profitable nor hurtful, nor faith nor infidelity, nor knowledge nor ignorance, nor prosperity nor adversity, nor increase nor decrease, nor Obedience nor rebellion, but by His determinate counsel and decree, and His definite sentence and will. Nor does the wink of him that sees, nor the subtlety of him that thinks, exceed the bounds of His will; but it is He who gave all things their existence or being. He is the Creator and Restorer and the sole operator of what He pleases; there is no one to reverse His decree, or delay what He has determined, nor is there any refuge for man from rebellion against Him, but only His help and mercy; nor has man any power to perform any duty towards Him, but through His love and will. Though they, genii, angels and devils should conspire together, either to put one single atom in motion, or cause it to cease its motion, without His will and approbation, they would not be able to do so. His will subsists in His essence, with the rest of His attributes, by which He willed from eternity the existence of those things that He decreed, which were produced in their proper seasons, according to His eternal will, without any Before or After, and with agreement both with His knowledge and will, and not by methodizing of thoughts, nor waiting for a proper time, for which reason no one thing is in Him a hindrance from another.

### God's Hearing and Sight

God - praised be His name - is Hearing and Seeing, and Hears and Sees. No audible sound, however still, escapes His Hearing; nor is anything visible so small as to escape His sight; for distance is no hindrance to His hearing, nor darkness to His sight. He sees without pupil or eyelid, and hears without any passage or ear, even as He knows without a brain, and performs His actions without the assistance of any corporeal limb, and creates without any instrument, for His attributes are not like those of men, any more than His Essence is like theirs.

### God's Word

God commands, forbids, promises, threatens by an eternal word, subsisting in His essence. Neither is it like the word of the creatures, nor does it consist in a voice, arising from the commotion of the air and the collision of bodies; nor in letters which are separated by the joining together of the lips, or the motion of the tongue. The Koran, the Law, the Gospel and the Psalms are Books sent down by Him to His Apostles. The Koran, indeed, is read with tongues, written in books and kept in hearts: yet, as subsisting in the essence of God, it does not become liable to separation and division, when it is transferred into the hearts and the papers. Thus Moses also heard the Word of God, without voice or letter, even as the saints behold the essence of God, without substance. And since these are His attributes, He lives and knows and wills and hears and sees and speaks, by life and knowledge and will and hearing and sight and word, not by His simple essence.

### God's Works

God - praised be His name - exists after such a manner, that nothing besides Him has any being, but what is produced by His operation, and flows from His justice, after the best, most excellent, most perfect and most just model. He is, moreover, Wise in His works, and Just in His decrees. But His justice is not to be compared with the justice of men. For a man may be held to act unjustly by invading the possessions of another; but to God, inasmuch as there is nothing which may belong to any other besides Himself, no wrong is imputable, for He cannot be considered as meddling with things not appertaining to Him. All things,

Himself only excepted, genii, devils, angels, heaven, earth, animals, plants, substance, and their attributes, all are His creation.

He created them by His power out of nothingness and brought them into existence, when as yet they were nothing at all, but He alone existing from eternity, neither was there any other with him. Now, He created all things from the beginning for the manifestation of His Power and His Will, and for the confirmation of word which was true from all eternity; not that He stood in need of them, nor wanted them; but He manifestly declared His glory in creating and producing and commanding, without being under any obligation, nor out of necessity. **Loving, kindness, favor, grace** and **beneficence** belong to Him whereas it is in His power to pour forth upon men a variety of torments, and to afflict them with various kinds of sorrows and diseases; and should He do this, His justice would not be arraigned, nor would He be chargeable with injustice. Yet He rewards those who worship Him for their obedience on account of His promise and beneficence not for their merit or of necessity, since there is nothing which He is under an obligation to perform; nor can any injustice be supposed in Him, nor can He be under any obligation to any person whatsoever. That His creatures, however, should be bound to serve him, arises from His having declared by the tongues of the Prophets, that it was due to Him by them. The Worship of God is not simply the dictates of the understanding, but He sent messengers to carry to men His commands and promises and admonitions: the veracity of these messengers He proved by manifest miracles, whereby men are obliged to give credit to them in those things which they relate.

Mr. George Sale rightly comments on the Mohammedan notion of God as follows:

> *"That both Mohammad and those among his followers who are reckoned orthodox, had and continue to have, just and true notions of God and His attributes, appears plain from the Koran itself and all the Mohammedan divines, so that it would be a loss of time, to refuse those who suppose the God of Mohammed to be different from the true God and only a fictitious deity or idol of his own creation."*[1]

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(1) Vide G. Sale's introduction to his translation of the Koran.

I will now give interpretations of some quotations from the Koran, bearing on the essence of God; this subject forming such an important feature of the teachings of the religion of Islam:

**The Unity of God,**

*"Say: He is God, the Singular, God the Support He begetteth not, is He begotten, nor is anything unto Him."*(1)

*"Truly your God is but one*(2)*. Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth, and of all that is between them*(3) *and Lord of the East and of the West*(4)*. God, there is no deity but He, Most excellent are His attributes."*(5)

**Proofs of His existence,**

*"The (God) bringeth forth the living out of the dead, and He bringeth the dead out of the living, and He quickeneth the earth after it hath been dead; and in like manner shall ye be brought forth (from your graves), of His signs (one is), that He hath created you of dust; and behold, ye (are become) men, spread over the face of the earth. And of His signs (another is), that He hath created for you, out of yourselves, wives, that ye may cohabit with them; and hath put love and compassion between you: verily herein are signs unto people who consider. And of His signs (are also), the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variety of your languages, and of your complexions; verily herein are signs unto men of understanding. And of His signs (are), your sleeping by night and by day, and your seeking (to provide for yourselves) of His abundance; verily herein (are signs unto people who hearken. Of His signs (others are) that He showeth you the lightning, to strike terror, and to give hope (of rain), and that He sendeth down water from heaven, and quickeneth thereby the*

(1) Koran: 112: 1- 4.
(2) Koran: 2: 163.
(3) Koran: 44: 7.
(4) Koran: 55:17.
(5) Koran: 20: 8.

*earth, after it hath been dead: verily herein are signs unto people who understand. And of His signs (this also is one, namely) that the 'heavens and the earth stand firm at His command: hereafter, when He shall call ye out of the earth at one summon, behold, ye shall come forth..."*[1]

*"When adversity befalleth men, they call upon their Lord, turning unto Him; afterwards, when He hath caused them to taste of His mercy, behold, a part of them associate (other deities) with their Lord; showing themselves ungrateful for the favors which We have bestowed on them." (Koran: 30:33)*

*"When We cause men to taste mercy, they rejoice therein; but if evil befalleth them, for that which their hands have before committed, behold, they despair. (It is) God Who hath created you, and hath provided food for you; hereafter will He cause you to die; and after that, will He raise you again to life" (Koran:30: 36-37).*

*"(It is) God Who created you in weakness, and after weakness hath given (you) strength; and after strength, he will (again) reduce (you) to weakness, and grey hair: He createth that which He pleaseth; and He (is) the Wise, the Powerful" (Koran: 30:54).*

### God's Omnipresence asserted

*"There is no private discourse among three persons, but He is the fourth of them; nor (among) five, but He is the sixth of them; neither (among) a smaller number than this, nor a larger, but He is with them, wheresoever they be: and He will declare unto them that which they have done, on the day of resurrection; for God knoweth all things" (Koran: 58: 7).*

### God's Omnipotence

*"God, There is no deity but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting: Neither slumber seizeth Him nor sleep; His,*

(1) Koran: 30: 19-25.

*whatsoever is in the heavens, and whatsoever is on the earth. Who is He that can intercede with Him, but by His permission? He knoweth what hath been before them and what shall be after them; yet naught of His knowledge shall they grasp, save what He willeth. His seat reaches over the heavens and the earth, and the upholding of both is no burden unto Him; and He is the High and the Great" (Koran: 2: 255).*

**Creator of all things**

*"He causes the dawn to appear, and hath ordained the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for computing time. The ordinance of the Mighty, the Wise." (Koran: 6: 96)*[1]

*"And it is He Who hath ordained the stars for You, that ye may be guided thereby in the darkness of the land and of the sea. Clear have We made Our signs to men of knowledge" (Koran: 6: 97).*

*"And it is He Who sendeth rain from Heaven, and We bring forth by it the buds of all the plants, and from them bring We forth the green foliage, and the close growing grain, and palm trees with sheaths of clustering dates, and gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike. Look ye on their fruits, when they ripen and bear fruit. Truly herein are signs unto people who believe... This is God your Lord. There is no deity but He, the creator of all things, therefore worship Him alone; and He watcheth over all things." (Koran: 6: 99)*

*"We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness touched Us" (Koran: 50: 38).*

**Perfect in His Works**

*"Blessed be He in Whose hand is the Kingdom, and over all*

(1)"The above lines contain a magnificent description of the divine majesty and providence, but it must be supposed that the translation comes not up to the dignity of the original. This passage is justly admired by the Mohammedans who recite it In their prayers, and some of them Wear it about them". (G. Sale, of the Koran).

*things is He potent. 'Who hath created death and life, to prove who of you will be most righteous in deed; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving*

*"Who hath created seven heavens one above another. No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy; repeat the gaze: seest thou a single flaw?*

*"Then twice more repeat the gaze: thy gaze shall return to thee dulled and weary." (Koran: 67: 1-4).*

**The Light of Heaven and Earth**

*"God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp - the lamp encased in glass - the glass, as it were a glistening star. From a blessed tree it is lighted: the olive tree neither Eastern nor Western, whose oil shines out as it were, even though fire touched it not. It is light upon light. God guideth whom He willeth to His light, and God setteth forth parables to men, for God knoweth all things" (Koran: 24: 35).*

**Provides for All**

*"Whoso chooseth this quickly passing life, quickly will We bestow thereon that which We please - even on him We choose; afterwards We will appoint hell for him, in which he shall burn - disgraced, outcast.*

*"But they who choose the life to come and strive after it, as it should be striven for, being also believers as for these, their striving shall be grateful (to God).*

*"To all - both to these and those - will We prolong the gifts of (Us We) your Lord; for not to any shall the gifts of thy Lord be denied.*

*"See how We have caused some of them to excel others; but the next life shall be greater in its grades, and greater in excellence.*

*"Set not up another Lord with God, lest thou sit thee down disgraced, helpless." (Koran: 17: 18-22)*

*"The Lord ordained that ye worship none but Him..."*
*(Koran: 17: 23)*

**His Words are Countless**

*"Say: Should the sea become ink, to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely fail, ere the words of my Lord would fail, though we brought (other seas) like it in aid..."*
*(Koran: 18: 109)*

*"If all the trees that are upon earth were to become pens, and if God should after that swell the sea into seven seas (of ink) His words would not be exhausted; for God is Mighty and Wise."*
*(Koran: 31: 27)*

**Has no Offspring**

*"And they say, 'God hath a son': No; Praise be to Him But - His is whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. All obey Him."*
*(Koran: 2: 116)*

*"Sole maker of the Heavens and of the Earth. And when He decreeth a thing, He only saith to it, 'Be' and it is..."*
*(Koran: 2: 117)*

*"Yet have they assigned the Jinns to God as His associates, though He created them; and in their ignorance they have falsely ascribed to Him sons and daughters. Glory be to Him, and high let Him be exalted above that which they attribute to Him." (Koran: 6: 100)*

*"Sole maker of the Heavens and the Earth; how, when He hath no consort, should He have a son? He hath created every thing, and He knoweth every thing"( Koran: 6: 101).*

*"This is God your Lord. There is no deity but He, the creator of all things; therefore worship Him alone; and He watches over*

*all things. They say; 'The God of Mercy hath gotten offspring.' Now have ye done a monstrous thing. Almost might the very Heavens be rent thereat, and the Earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in fragments, that they ascribe a son to the God of Mercy, when it beseemeth not the God of Mercy to beget a son..."( Koran: 19: 87-91)*

**Created All Beings to Adore Him**

*"I have not created Jinns and men, but that they should worship Me." (Koran: 51: 56)*

**How He Speaketh with Man**

*"It is not for man that God should speak with him, but by vision, or from behind a veil: Or, He sendeth a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He will: for He is exalted (and) Wise.*

*"Thus have We sent the Spirit (Gabriel) to thee with a revelation, by our command; Thou knewest not, ere this, what the 'Book' was, or what the (true) faith was. But We have ordained it for a light: by it will We guide whom We please of Our servants. And thou (O Mohammad), shall guide their feet into the right way." (Koran: 42: 51-52)*

**God is Creator of Good and Evil Deeds, and Yet Good Is from Him, but Evil from Man in Consequence of his Ignorance or Disobedience:-**

*"By the sun and his noonday brightness; by the moon when she followeth him; By the day when it revealeth his glory; By the night when it enshroudeth him; By the earth and Him Who spread it forth; By a soul and Him Who perfected it revealed to it the way of wickedness and the way of piety (to choose between them) - Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it."( Koran: 91: 1-10) "If good fortune betide them, they say, 'this is from God' and if evil betide them, they say 'this is from thee (the Prophet). Say: All is from God: Whatever*

*good betideth thee, is from God, and whatever betideth thee, of evil, is from thyself; and We have sent thee to mankind as an apostle: God is thy sufficient witness." (Koran: 4: 78-79)*

### Omniscient and Omnipotent

*"And with Him are the keys of the secret things; none knoweth them, but He: He knoweth whatever is on the land and in the sea; and no leaf falleth but He knoweth it; neither is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor a thing green or sere, but it is noted in a distinct writing."*[1]*(Koran: 6: 59)*

### All-Seeing but Unseen

*"The eyes do not reach Him, but He reaches the eyes: and he is the Subtle, the All-informed." ( Koran: 6: 103)*

*"It is He Who in six days created the Heavens and the Earth, then ascended His throne. He knoweth that which entereth the earth, and that which goeth forth from it, and what cometh down from Heaven, and beholdeth all your actions.*

*"His is the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth: and to God shall all things return. He causeth the night to pass into the day, and He causeth the day to pass into the night; and He knoweth the very secrets of the bosom." ( Koran: 57: 4-6)*

### The Existence of God

Of all the doctrines and beliefs that have been objected to in this age of materialism, the greatest is the belief in the existence of God. The first demand which an atheist makes is:

*"If you show God to me, I will believe in Him. How can I believe in Him without seeing Him?"* Western influences have gone a long way towards effacing from the hearts of many young men, the imprint of the Divine Being, and hundreds of college students and others, have begun to deny existence of God. There are thousands of persons who, though

(1) On the preserved tabled, on which are written all the decrees of God.

refraining from an open declaration of their views through fear of the community, have really no faith in Him; therefore, I submit the following suggestions on the subject, that haply some fortunate soul may be benefited thereby.

Man knows different things by means of different senses. Some things we know by means of seeing, some by tasting. A color is known by seeing, not by smelling, touching or tasting. If anybody should say, that he will acknowledge a color, only by its fragrance, would such a person be regarded as wise? On the other hand, if any body seeks to know, by smelling, things which can be known by tasting, such as sourness and sweetness, bitterness and saltiness, he will never be able to do so. Therefore it is not right, that we should accept those things only which we can behold with our eyes, and disbelieve those things which are not recognizable by the eye. How absurd is, then, the demand that God must be shown to us before we believe in Him.

Moreover, there are certain things in man himself, the existence of which he recognizes, without having seen them. We do not know all things merely by seeing, but they are known by means of five different senses. Now, there are many things which are not knowable, even by these gateways of knowledge, there being other ways of knowing them. For instance, reason, memory and intelligence are things which are not denied by anybody; yet nobody has ever seen, heard, tasted, smelt or touched them. How did we, then, come to know that there are such things as reason, or memory, or intelligence? Again, has anybody ever seen, smelt, touched or tasted energy? Even the simplest man can see that we have not known these things by means of the five senses, but that there are other evidences that have led us to the knowledge of their existence. We see that when a man is confronted with a difficulty, he thinks for a while, and then devises a plan, by which he is able to solve his difficulty. When we see difficulties being removed in this way, we conclude that there is something in man which is of service to him on such occasions, and we call it reason. Thus, we do not become aware of the existence of reason directly through the five senses, but we obtain knowledge of it by means of its wonderful manifestations. Similarly when we see a man able to carry heavy loads, and some man, able to carry heavier weights than others, we infer that there is a capacity in man, which enables him to bear these burdens, and

which some persons possess in a greater degree than others. This capacity we call strength. We have not seen strength, but we have seen the deeds that are done by strength, and from these we have concluded its existence.

Thus, we find that the more subtle a thing is, the more hidden it is from the human eye, and it is by actions, and not by the five senses, that we perceive the existence of such things.

But God is the subtlest of all. How unjust is it, then, to say that we cannot believe in the existence of God, unless He is shown to us. Has anybody ever seen electricity? But can we, then, deny the transmission of messages and signals to long distances, lighting and, the working of machinery by means of electricity? The discovery of ether has brought about a revolution in the world of physical science, but has any scientist been able to find it by means of his five senses? But if we deny its existence, we find ourselves unable to explain, how the rays of the sun reach the earth. How unjust is, then, the demand that in order to be believed in, God must be visible to the eye while there are so many things which are believed in, though they are not visible to the eye or perceptible by any other of the five senses. God is visible, but only to the eyes that are capable of seeing Him. But if anybody is desirous of seeing Him, He is before the whole world through His powers, and in spite of His being hidden, He is the most apparent of all. This fact has been briefly, but very exquisitely mentioned in the Holy Koran in the following words:

*"The eyes do not reach Him, but He reacheth the eyes: and He is the Subtle, the All informed." ( Koran: 6: 103)*

In this verse, God draws the attention of man to the fact, that his eyes are not capable of seeing Him, for He is subtle, and subtle things cannot be perceived by the eyes. What, then, is the way of knowing God? The Koran answers this question by saying: "And He reacheth the eyes:" namely though the eyes of man are not capable of seeing Him, yet he reveals Himself to man by a display of His powers, and by a manifestation of His attributes. Manifold are the ways in which He reveals Himself to man. He displays His unlimited power sometimes by terror striking signs, some-times by signs of mercy, and at others, by accepting prayer. If God were to be believed in, only if He Were

perceptible by the eye, then we should have to deny the existence of about four-fifths of the things of the world, or the existence of all things, if we accept as true the view of certain philosophers who allege, that nobody can see the substance of anything in the world, and that it is only the form that we see.

We know very little of God, and yet we know that God exists; that there is a Great Mysterious Power, at work behind the Universe.

In ancient times, Nature, or its forces, was deemed to be freakish, capricious powers, personified, to popular intelligence, as demons, and the like. Now we know that there is nothing freakish or capricious about Nature that Nature works in accordance with a fixed law- the law of the Universe, the law laid and established by the Great Mysterious Power at work behind the Universe.

All we know of that Great Mysterious Power is compounded of all we know of the various laws - discovered from time to time - which govern the Universe.

There are three main laws in the Universe - the Law of Creation, the Law of Substance and the Law of Evolution; so if we seek, as it were, to personify the Great Mysterious Power, and clothe Him with attributes that we mortal men can comprehend, we shall endeavor to visualize him as Creator, Sustainer and Evolver.

The Arabic language has one word which comprises all three ideas - Rabb-ul-Alameen - the word Rabb signifying Creator, Sustainer, and one who has endowed every object with the capacity of ultimate development thereby anticipating the doctrine of Evolution, many centuries before Darwin gave his theories to the world.

At every evolutionary stage of matter, however transient it is we find a course prescribed, and an organization preordained. Nature everywhere obeying the Law.

As the Holy Koran says: "*And to Allah does obeisance whatever is in heaven and earth, willingly or unwillingly."( Koran: 13: 15)*

Over and over again, the Holy Koran lays down with great clarity, that a Reign of Law exists dominating the whole material world; and every day, fresh discoveries of science do but prove inspired accuracy of the Sacred Book. For after all, this is the sum-total of all scientific discoveries; all growth and all development of every element in Nature, is under the Rule of the Law.

Is, therefore, this Reign of Law - this mechanism, as it were, of rule and regulation - intentional? Or is it accidental?

Call it mechanism if you will; but can you dissociate mechanism, from mind?

The machine itself cannot think; but what of the mind that made it? Mechanism cannot construct itself.

In all human mechanism, we believe in the priority of laws and principles, on which certain mechanism is working. We acknowledge the pre-existence of the mind that devised the machine, and set it working.

Why do we hesitate, when we come to the great mechanism of Nature? I suppose, we are afraid lest, if we once make such an admission, we shall have to accept Law, as separate from Matter, to admit that Mind has priority over Substance.

About seventy years ago, the Atomic theory was the popular craze. The Atom was our great God, our first cause and origin; but later, we found this god itself a slave to Law. It was found to be, not an origin, but a product of some electronic specialization, which in its turn receives its birth, not as an accident, but under a Law - the Law of Condensation - from the collocation of ethereal specks. But this other, as it is called, is, in its turn, a law-ridden entity.

Ernst Haeckel and others, refusing to admit the priority of Mind to Matter, sought a way out by regarding matter and energy as one and the same thing, with "law-abidingness" as a permanent characteristic, and calling it Law-Substance. Law-Substance, therefore, is a first cause, self-created, and the creator of other things, self-existing, and the maintainer

of subsequent growth, omnipresent, and all-pervading, indestructible and infinite; add to these the attributes of all-knowing and all-powerful, designer and regularizer, though you style yourself atheist or free-thinker, you believe in the God of Islam. As the Holy Koran says:

*"And to Him doth obey what is in the heavens and the earth. And sign to them is the night; we draw forth from it the day, then Jo, they are in the dark; and the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty and the knowing. And as for the moon, We have ordained for it stages, till it becomes again as an old dry palm-branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun, that he should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All float on in a sphere."*[1]

Thus is the whole Solar System under Divine Ordinance.

What was that Law - the Law of Gravity - "evolved from accident", what made the earth stand on its orbit, with its axis inclined?

What a contradiction in terms - law and accident. To what lengths will we not go to avoid belief in the Divine Ordinance?

Is the camera an accident? The lens, the sensitive paper, the light regulating contrivance, and so forth, all suggest design and mind; and yet the camera is but the crudest copy of an eye which is presumably, a thing evolved at random. And what about the feeling that the image reflected produces? The lens of the camera reflects the image, but it does not see, it does not feel; whereas the eye sends a thrill into the very soul, when we see anything beautiful.

Can we give or receive a telephone message without an "exchange"? Some design to connect the giver and the receiver is indispensable.

The brain of an army - known in modern parlance as General Head Quarters - is preeminently the product of design. Is the brain of man just a haphazard contrivance, meaningless in its inception?

(1) Koran: 36: 37-40.

We assign a distinct design to every one of the hundred and one pipes fixed, in the machinery of an ordinary steam engine. Are the million and one nerves that work so miraculously in our own bodies, purposeless and without intent?

Yet, I could even worship this Fetish of Accident, if all these defined movements of our planet had failed to produce desirable results, making for our benefit. And this being so, I am compelled to believe in some Will, under whose control Nature works, not blindly. The alternation of day and night - which causes changes in the weather, affecting the atmosphere, changing the course of the winds, bringing the rainy seasons and the dry weather, in a desired order; the withering of Nature, and its resuscitation; these, and the life of man himself, depending on the peculiar bend of the earth sphere towards its orbit, are these all at random?

You will not find a single thing in the realm of Nature which is unconnected with your own existence. As the Book says:

> *"Those who remember Allah... And reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, (say): Our Lord, Who looks to our sustenance and maintenance, Thou hast not created all this in vain. Glory be to Thee."*[1]

The unintelligible phenomena of yesterday are, today, instinct with a great and real purpose; and so it will be with the milliards of things which still baffle us. This being the case, I have every right to suppose that every object in Nature admits of my benefit - if only I know how - and is subservient to me under the ordinance of some mind, which I call Allah; for, did you ever think of a contrivance, or scheme out a design, in the working out of which you did not find the necessary aids already existing in Nature?

But you will say: things in themselves are not subject to design; it is only man's intelligent use of them that makes them useful.

We all know that light and the color known as green strengthen the sight. Green is the prevailing color in nature after light. But, it is said, the

(1) Koran: 3: 191.

green color was not made intentionally to strengthen sight; rather the eye became accustomed to it, and so derived benefit from it.

But consider the case of the mole. The mole has eyes, but being generally away from the light, it is blind. It cannot make its surroundings subservient to its sight. Whence it may be seen, to what an extent the eye is indebted to light and green color.

In support of his theory, that Nature is not with purpose intrinsically, but that its purpose is, as it were, of man's contriving, Ernst Haeckel adduces the illustration of powder.

Powder was for ages lying useless and unused; by finding use for it we have invested it with a purpose. But that is tantamount to assorting that inquiries have invested powder with its properties, or in other words that the purpose of the explosive was already in it, but in a dormant state; and that it is due to us, that it has become active. All of which tends rather to prove design, than otherwise. But there are other ways of looking at it.

If a mind works upon material, giving it shape to serve a certain purpose, it is impossible for another person, to use that material in a way other than that in which it was designed by its maker. If you deny the design of its maker, you are looking for trouble and wasting your effort.

Here are pieces of iron and wood before me: I use them in making a machine, and any person desirous of using that machine, must do so in the way intended by me, and in that way only.

Can you use the things that God has made, otherwise than in the way intended by Him?

Your body is a wonderful machine, endowed with numerous faculties, to which are added free will, and the power of discretion. But can you use your nose for seeing? Or can you eat through your ear?

This machine of your body has been fashioned by an Intelligence and a Mind, and if you act contrary to its designs, your actions will not be acceptable in the realm of Nature. For thus says the Holy Koran:

*"Is it, then, other than Allah's way that they seek to follow; and to Him submits whoever is in the heaven or on the earth, willingly or unwillingly... And whoever desires a way other than submission (Islam) it shall not be accepted from him; and in the end, he shall be the loser."*[1]

Again, if a particular form of matter involves, in its being, certain principles, the knowledge and application of which, alone make the realization of that purpose possible, then it is certain that a mind has pre-ordained it. If the small form of matter had existed independently of such principles, and if there had been no need of their knowledge, nor had any advantage accrued to us in our application of such knowledge, then one might, perhaps, deny the purpose behind it.

The Holy Koran tells us, that everything in nature is for our benefit, and further apprises us of the principles which will enable us thoroughly to make use of them:

*"The Beneficent God, taught the Koran. He created man, taught him the mode of expression. The sun and the moon follow a reckoning, and the herbs do obey (Him). And the heaven: He raised it on high; and He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure; and keep up the balance with equity, and do not make the measure deficient. And the earth He has set it for living creatures; therein are fruit and palms having sheathed clusters, and the grain with (its) husk and fragrance. Which then of the bounties of the Lord will you reject?"*[2]

Note the words in italics. The whole universe has been regulated with mathematical precision; and that we may derive the best advantage from it, we must respect the measure, find out these reckonings and measures, and not make them deficient.

Every created thing, from the stars of heaven to the smallest herbs that grow on the earth, observes rules laid down with mathematical

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(1) Koran: 3: 83-85.
(2) Koran 55:1-13.

reckoning, and observes measures, prescribed for its creation and development.

In short everything that is created in this universe is based on mathematical principles; and all our scientific researches owe their existence to this science of measure and reckoning.

I could agree with Ernst Haeckel, if man, in this search for purpose in Nature, could disregard these mathematical principles. In reality we did not create purpose for Nature; we simply discovered those measures and rules which had been laid down for the working out of the purpose.

Can we, then, deny, behind the working of Nature, the existence of some Great Mind, the Regularizer, the Reckoner and the Measurer? Let us, in the words of the Holy Koran, *"glorify the Name of Our Lord Most High, Who creates, then balances; Who measures, then guides."*

*(Koran: 87: 1-3)*

Does evolution of matter really consist in the development of its potentialities? Is not the human organism proven, by biological research, to be the final and best evolution of matter?

The consciousness which is evolved out of animated matter, in the animal kingdom, in the form of impulses, evolves into natural passion in man. But this is not the final growth. In its turn, it must evolve ethics and high philosophy. Where, then, is the constructive ability, inherent in matter, which should now work all the more vigorously, to sublimate my consciousness into high moral and philosophic growth? Do I possess a nature which automatically distinguishes between Right and Wrong? Or must I cultivate such a nature, through guidance? Do I, by nature, nauseate at wrong philosophy? Do I, by instinct, spurn things injurious to my intellect? Do I discern between wholesome and unwholesome food, without guidance? Man, who represents the highest possible form of evolved matter, is hopelessly destitute of that constructive ability for the evolution of this intellect, which discriminates so unerringly in the physical building of organism. The very fact that, as far as the unconscious growth of matter goes, this constructive ability works so splendidly, but disappears on the rise of consciousness, proves conclusively, that it was not an inherent faculty in matter, but an external

guidance - guidance from the Source that has been called *Rabb* - who is the God of Islam.

If the scientific world agrees then, that law predominates in matter, force and energy and if it also believes in Monism, it follows that it must believe in one design and in one mind. There may be a hundred and one laws at work in nature, but they all converge on one purpose. In short, law is, and must be, obeyed if the world is to go at all. Law is the "obeyed" entity and in this connection, the reader may be interested to learn, that the word Allah, Who is the object of worship with Muslims, literally means "The Obeyed".

"God says," according to the Prophet, "do not abuse the Universe, because I am the Universe," - a great truth and undeniable reality! It means that all the manifestations of nature are the manifestations of the God-head, and that all the forces and laws of Nature are the features and characteristics of that Great Being.

To be in touch with Nature, is the secret of all success, of all felicity in life; and if in Islam, the dictum has been pronounced, in a somewhat different language, "to imbue ourselves with Divine Attributes", it means the same thing. For the attributes of God, as mentioned in the Holy Koran, do perfectly and completely index the working of Nature; and if, to believe in God, is to accept Him, as the Source of all Law, and to worship Him means simply to obey His Law, how can we disbelieve in the God of Islam?

## *2. Belief in the Angels of God*

The angels are created of light, and endowed with life, speech and reason. They are free of carnal desire and the disturbance of anger: they disobey not God in what He has commanded them, but do all that they are commanded. Their food is, to celebrate God's glory; their drink, to proclaim His holiness; their conversation, to commemorate God; their pleasure, to worship Him. The angels are created in different forms and with different powers.

The number of angels is very great; it can be known to no one except

to God. Four of the angels are archangels, namely, Jibril (Gabriel), the angel of revelations; Mikhail (Michael), the angel of rain; Israfil, the angel who will announce the advent of Resurrection; Azrail, the angel of death.

Every man is attended by two recording angels, called the "Kiramul-Katibeen", or the illustrious writers, one of whom records his good actions, and the other his evil actions. There are also two other kinds of angels, called 'Monkar' and 'Nákeer', who examine the dead in the grave.

There are also two celebrated angels, 'Radwan' who is in charge of Paradise, and 'Maliyk' who is in charge of Hell.

The angels intercede for men, while they celebrate the praise of God; they implore forgiveness for the dwellers of earth. They also act as guardians for men. Each man has a succession of angels before and behind him, who watch over him by God's behest.

### *3. Belief in the Scriptures of God*

The fundamental position, on which the superstructure of the Mohammedan Religion is erected, is that, from the beginning to the end of the world, there has been, and for ever will be, but one true orthodox religion that consists, as to matter of faith, in the acknowledgement of the only true God, and in the belief in, and obedience to such messengers or prophets of God, as He has been pleased to send from time to time, with credentials, to reveal His wit to mankind; and as to matter of practice, the religion of God consists in the observance of the immutable and eternal laws of right and wrong, together with such other precepts and ceremonies, as God ordained as fit, for the time being, according to the different dispensations in different ages. These precepts and ceremonies were in themselves non-essential, but they became strictly obligatory by God's positive command and were, therefore, temporary and subject to alteration, according to His will and wisdom. Hence, the name 'Islam', signifying absolute surrender to the will of God, is used commonly to denote the Mohammedan Religion. This name, however, (Islam) also

applies to God's religion, since the beginning of the world, inasmuch as all true religion is nothing, but absolute submission to God's will.

As to scriptures, the Muslims, are taught, that God, in diverse ages of the world, gave revelations of His will in books, to several prophets. The number of these sacred Books is said to be 104: ten Books were given to Adam, fifty to Seth, thirty to Idris (Enoch), ten to Abraham; and the other four, being the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospel and the Koran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus and Mohammad. No further revelation to mankind is to be expected. The Prophet Mohammad is, as taught by the Koran, the seal of God's messengers and prophets.

All of those divine Books, except the four last, are believed to be now entirely lost. As to the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Gospel, the Muslims give no credit to the present copies of these Books, which they believe to have undergone many alterations and corruptions, though there might possibly be some part of the true word of God therein. Any passages in the present copies which in sense are not in harmony with the teachings of the Koran, as far as matters of faith are concerned, are held by Muslims to be no true revelation. Hence, such statements in the present copies of the Old and New Testaments, as attributing to God a son, or to the Divinity a plurality or a corporal form, are dogmatically and emphatically condemned as schismatic.

On the other hand, if any precept, tenet, law or regulation, relating to mode of worship, or rules of right and wrong, found in the Koran, is in harmony with similar precepts, as taught by the Testaments, it is because such tenets are immutable and eternal, and relate to that part of God's one, true and orthodox religion which is subject to no change or alteration, inasmuch as such law were saved from corruption.

Apparently it is due to the misunderstanding of this fundamental superstructure of the Mohammedan Religion (to wit: that from the beginning to the end of the world, there has been, and still for ever will be, but one true religion), that some of the prejudiced class of western historians and commentators have been apt to wrongly describe such systems, rites or rules of the Religion of Islam, of which the like exist in the Jewish Scriptures from these books. Such critics, if absolutely innocent, conscientious and well-informed, must need admit, that these

common precepts are but confirmed by the Koran as immutable in themselves.

It must be again reiterated, until the basis of the Religion of Islam is well understood, that this religion does not profess to be a new religion formulated by the Prophet Mohammad, but a continuation of the true religious principles, established by God through His revelations to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and to other inspired Messengers of God. The revelations of God's prophets, prior to the advent of Mohammedanism are held to have been partly corrupted by the hand of man, through the various renderings and diverse versions of some. All portions of the word of God that were by chance or otherwise saved from corruption, such as those that relate to that part of God's religion which is eternal and immutable, have been preserved and confirmed by the Koran together with other corrected beliefs and dogmas of faith, and such additional rules of practical devotion, as God judged fit for together with other corrected beliefs and dogmas of faith, and entirely misleading that any critic should suggest, that Mohammedanism is 'indebted', either to the Jewish or any other dispensation, for any elements in its system.

In brief, it is enjoined upon every Muslim, to believe in God's previous Books of revelations, from Adam to Jesus, in so far as the contents of any extant book of them are not contradicted by the Koran.

At the advent of Islam, the Word of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testament, was wrapped up in various superstitions and was spoiled by an admixture of ungodly beliefs and imaginations. The Jews were openly charged, in the early chapters of the Koran, with having corrupted their Scriptures with stiffing passages. They obstinately and impiously denied the advent of Jesus. They believed that Christ was yet to come. They spoke ill, and most wrongly and indecently, of the acknowledged Jesus Christ and of his revered mother, the Virgin Mary. They attributed to God the adoption of a son in the person of Ezra.

With regard to Christianity, its real and pure doctrines were exceedingly and abominably corrupted[1]. A sect substituted the Virgin

(1) Vide G. Sale's Prelim. Discourse.

Mary for God, or worshipped her as such. These were called the Mariamites[1].

Christians also believed in the divinity of Jesus. They worshipped him as God, called him the son of God, and even God Himself.

Dr. Hughes, commenting on the state of degradation, into which the Christian Church had fallen, at the advent of Islam, writes as follows:- "The bitter dissensions of the Greeks, Neslorians, Eutechians and Monophysites, are matters of history, and must have held up the religion of Jesus to the ridicule of the heathen world. The controversies, regarding the nature and person of our Divine Lord, had begotten a sect of Tritheists.

"The worship of the Virgin Mary had also given rise to a religious controversy between the Antidues, Mariamites and the Collyridians; the former holding that the Virgin Mary was not immaculate and the latter, raising her to a position of a goddess. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that the Arabian reformer turned away from Christianity."[2]

The Gospel of St. Barnabas commonly considered by Christian theologians as "apocryphal", is most in harmony, as to matters of faith, with the Koran. Jesus Christ is spoken of in that Gospel as the servant of God; the word of God and a Spirit from God. His miraculous birth, being born without a father was even less supernatural than the creation of Adam who was created by God's power with neither father nor mother.

The crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews is entirely refuted.

## ST. BARNABAS AND THE KORAN

In that Gospel, it is asserted, that Judas, the traitor, was he who was crucified, in the place of the Lord Jesus. "Of this Gospel", writes Mr.

(1) Vide Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam p. 53.
(2) See Hughes' Dictionary of Islam p. 53.

Sale, "the Moriscoes in Africa have a translation in Spanish, and there is in the library of Prince Eugene of Savoy, a manuscript of some antiquity, containing an Italian translation of the same Gospel made, it is supposed, for the use of renegades..."[1]

In St. Barnabas' Gospel, the Prophet Mohammad is foretold by name, as the Periclyte that is, the famous or illustrious, that being the signification of the name of Mohammad in Arabic; thereby justifying the passage in the Koran (chap. 61) where Jesus is formally asserted to have foretold his coming, under his other name of Ahmad, which is derived from the same root as Mohammad and of the same import.

George Sale states that he inspected a Spanish translation of the Italian copy to St. Barnabas' Gospel, of which he gives the following account:

"There is a preface prefixed to it, wherein the discoverer of the original MS., who was a Christian monk called Fra Marino tells us that, having accidentally met with a writing of Irenacus (among others), wherein he speaks against St. Paul, alleging for his authority the gospel of St. Barnabas, he became exceedingly desirous to find this gospel; and that God, of His mercy, having made him very intimate with Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590) one day, as they were together in that Pope's library, His Holiness fell asleep and he, to employ himself, reached down a book to read, the first he laid hand on proved to be the very gospel he wanted; overjoyed at the discovery, he scrupled not to hide his prize in his sleeve, and on the Pope's awaking, took leave of him carrying with him that celestial treasure, by reading of which he became a convert to Mohammedanism.

"This Gospel of Barnabas contains a complete history of Jesus Christ, from His birth to His ascension, and most of the circumstances of the four real gospels are to be found therein, but many of them turned, and some artfully enough, to favor the Mohammedan system. The passages produced from the Italian MS. by M. de la Monnoye are to be seen in this Spanish version almost word for word"[2].

(1) Sale's preface to his translation of the Koran.
(2) Ibid.

## THE KORAN

The practical side of both the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as concerning social matters and civil law, is most deficient; and that deficiency is made good by the Koran, it being the last divine Word of God.

Let us now make a swift survey of the Koran, as far as our limited space in this work allows; for to describe it in detail would require unlimited time and space. For various reasons, all being much to the advantage of the non Muslim reader, I shall content myself with a number of quotations of what was written on the Koran by the pen of non Muslim critics, whose writings on the subject can be passed by a Muslim, as giving a sufficiently true picture of the Holy Koran. However, it must be remembered that, as a miraculously Divine Book, the Koran, when translated into a foreign language, necessarily loses a great deal of its supernatural elegance and purity of style.

Mr. Sale addresses the reader of his English version of the Koran in the following words:

"...though the reader must not imagine the translation to come up to the original, notwithstanding my endeavors to do it justice."

In another place, the same writer comments on the Koran as follows:

"The Koran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language, in the dialect of the tribe of the Quraish, the most noble and polite of all the Arabians; but with some mixture though very rarely, of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabian tongue and, as the more orthodox believe and are taught by the book itself, inimitable by any human pen, and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, greater than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its origin."

"And to this miracle Mohammed himself chiefly appealed for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most eloquent men in Arabia which was at the same time stocked with thousands whose sole

study and ambition it was, to excel in elegance of style and composition, to produce even a single chapter that might be compared with it. I will mention but one instance out of several, to show that this book was really admired for the beauty of its composition by those who must be allowed to have been competent judges. A poem of Labib Ibn Rabia, in Mohammed's time, being affixed to the gate of the temple of Mecca, an honor allowed to none but the most esteemed performances, none of the other poets durst offer anything of their own in competition with it. But the second chapter of the Koran, being affixed near it soon after, Labib himself (then an idolater) on reading the first verses only, was struck with admiration, and immediately professed the religion taught therein, declaring that such Words could proceed from an inspired person only. This Labib was afterwards of great service to Mohammed in writing answers to the satires and invectives that were made on him and his religion.(1)"

Von Goethe, the renowned German author, speaking of the Koran in his West-Oestlicher Divan, states:

"However often we turn to it, (the Koran), at first disgusting us each time afresh, soon attracts, astounds and, in the end, enforces our reverence... Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim, is stern, grand, terrible, ever and anon truly sublime. Thus, this book will go on exercising through all ages, a most potent influence."(2)

Dr. Steingass, the learned compiler of an English-Arabic and Arabic-English Dictionary (W.H. Allen and Co.) has recorded his opinion on the Koran in Dr. Hughes' Dictionary of Islam. After alluding to the above words of Goethe, Dr. Steingass writes: "These words seem to me so much the more weighty and worthy of attention, as they are uttered by one who, whatever his merits or demerits in other respects may be deemed to be, indisputably belongs to the greatest masters of language of all times, and stands foremost as a leader of modern thought and the intellectual culture of modern times." Here Dr. Steingass quotes the words of Goethe and then says, "A work, then which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions, even in the distant

(1) See Sales Prelim. discourse in his translation of the Koran.

(2) See Goethe's West-Oesticher Divan. These words of Goethe were placed by Mr. Rodwell by way of motto on the reverse of the title page of his translation of the Koran.

reader, distant as to time, and still more so, as to mental development, a work which not only conquers repugnance with which he may begin its perusal, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration. Such a work must be a wonderful production of the human mind indeed, and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind. Much has been said, in the preceding pages, to acknowledge, to appreciate, and to explain the literary excellences of the Koran, and a more or less distinct admission, that Buffon's much-quoted saying: '*Le style est l'homme*,' is here more justified than ever, underlies all these verdicts. We may well say the Koran is one of the grandest books ever written, because it faithfully reflects the character and life of one of the greatest men that ever breathed. 'Sincerity', writes Carlyle, 'sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Koran'. This same sincerity, this ardor and earnestness in the search for truth, this never flagging perseverance in trying to impress it, when partly found, again and again upon his unwilling hearers, appears to me as the real and undeniable 'seal of prophecy' in Mohammad[1]..."

But the approaches to truth are many, and he who devoted all his powers and energies, with untiring patience and self denial, to the task of leading a whole nation by one of these approaches, from a coarse and effete idolatry, to the worship of the living God, has certainly a strong claim to our warmest sympathies, as a faithful servant and noble champion of truth.

It is, however, not my intention to dwell here any longer upon this side of the question. Praise has been bestowed in this work on the Koran and its author, without stint or grudge, and the unanimity of so many distinguished voices, in this respect, will no doubt impress the general reader in favor of the sacred book of the Mohammedans which until now he may have known only by name.

Dealing with the opinion, expressed on the Koran by some European authors who dwelt upon the pretended inferiority of the later portions of the Koran in comparison with the earlier chapters, Dr. Steingass ably remarks as follows:

(1) Cf. Dr. Steingass as quoted by Dr. Hughes in his "Dictionary of Islam".

"Not being an Arabic scholar himself (Goethe), he knew the Koran only through the translations existing at the time which follow throughout the order of the received text... Those critics, on the other hand, who view the Koran with regard to the chronological order of its constituents, follow the descending scale in their estimate. But if we consider the variety and heterogeneousness of the topics, on which the Koran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected; on the contrary, it would appear to be strangely out of place. Let us not forget that in the book, as Mohammad's newest biographer, Ludolf Krehl (Das Leben des Mohammed, Leipzig 1884); expresses it, 'there is given a complete code of creed and morals as well as of the law based thereupon. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive commonwealth for instruction for the administration of justice, for military organization, for finance, for a most careful legislation for the poor: all built up on the belief in the one God Who holds man's destiny in His hand." Where so many important objects are concerned, the standard of excellence, by which we have to gauge the composition of the Koran as a whole, must vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case. Sublime, and chaste, where the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high-pitched, strains to the imagination of a poetically-gifted people, where the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will, or of rebellion against it, are pictured; touching in its simple, almost crude earnestness, when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messenger, and a solemn warning for those, to whom he has been sent, in the histories of the prophets of old: the language of the Koran adapts itself to the exigencies of everyday life, when this everyday life, in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in to harmony with the fundamental principles of the new dispensation.

"Here, therefore, its merits, as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Mohammad's contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers, as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body, animated by ideas, far beyond these which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a

civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history."

"When a long period of conquests scattered the Arabs to the farthest East and to the farthest West, their spoken language might deviate from its pristine purity, slurring over unaccented syllables and dropping terminations. But the fine idiom of their forefathers, as deposited in the Koran, remained the language of their prayer and their pious meditation, and thus lived on with them, as a bond of unity, an object of national love and admiration, and a source of literary development, for all times."[1]

The Koran, therefore, is the last Scripture from God which has superseded by its new dispensation all preceding Scriptures, containing all comprehensible instructions and laws, all matters concerning the relation between the Creator and His creature, and between man and man. It is a miraculous book which is a poem, far beyond the power of poets to imitate, a code of laws bearing on every institution of an extensive commonwealth, on instruction, on the administration of justice, on military organization, on finance, on a most careful legislation for the poor and a complete code of beliefs and morals; all built up on the perfected belief in the one God Who holds man's destiny in His Hand. It embodies a correct summary of the true religion which former prophets from the time of Adam had taught to their respective countries, and a solemn warning to all mankind, to whom the "Seal of Prophets" had been sent to reclaim and to reform. It exposes and refutes the pretensions and incorrect interpretations of rabbis and priests who misled their people. These latter were often called upon, in the Koran, to come to a reasoning with the followers of the new faith and, then to judge for themselves, as to whether Mohammedanism was to be rejected by pure reason cleared of every grain of partiality. But the high voice from Heaven was not hearkened to, and differences of a religious nature still continue between Muslims and non- Muslims.

The Koran is a Divine Book which from the day of its revelation through the message of the Arabian Prophet and Apostle of God, up to this moment, has undergone no alteration whatsoever[2]. It is the Sacred Book that continues to reign over the hearts of its hearers, to convince

(1) Vide Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam pp. 526-530.

(2) See Sir Muir's Life of Mohammad; Dr. Hughes' Dict of Islam.

them, through their own conscience and spiritual nature of its Divine origin. No human pen, however powerful, can venture to imitate it. The miraculous nature of the Koran has, long ago, been solemnly confirmed by those who were the most competent judges. The Arabians could boast of no other literature than witty poems of eloquence in their own language, though as they paid due honor to any distinguished poem by their famous poets, they were struck with infinite admiration when they heard the Prophet of God rehearsing certain portions of God's new Gospel to them. Their own celebrated Rabiaa whose poem was attached to the Sacred Pantheon of the Kaaba, could, without much trouble or hesitation, judge that the Koran of Mohammad was rightly a Divine Book, and that the illiterate orphan was the true messenger of God. From the perusal of the concise, but accurate history of the Prophet in part II of this essay, it is clear enough, how the obstinate minded Arabs of the desert received the Book with adoration and perfect reverence. Again, the contents of the Koran most readily answer all questions that may be raised on religious or civil matters. I will quote here some interpreted passages from that Holy Book, as specimens of the rest, and leave them to recommend themselves:

**1- Calling the Jews and Christians to come to agreement(1) with the Muslims:**

> *"Say, O ye who have received the Scripture (Jews and Christians) come to a just determination between us and you; that we worship not any except God, and associate no creature with Him; and that the one of us takes no other for Lord(2) beside God. But if they turn back, say; Bear Witness that we are true believers."( Koran: 3: 64)*

**2- Ordering the Prophet to praise God:**

> *"Say, O God, Possessor of the Kingdom, Thou givest*

(1) That is to come to such terms of agreement as are indispensably consonant to the doctrine of all the prophets and scriptures and therefore cannot be reasonably rejected.

(2) The Jews and Christians used to pay rather blind obedience to their priests and monks who took upon them to pronounce what things were lawful and what were unlawful and to dispense with the laws of God. (George Sale).

*dominion whom Thou wilt, and Thou takest away Kingdom from whom Thou wilt: Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou humblest whom Thou wilt, in Thy hand is Good, and Thou art the almighty: Thou causest the night to succeed the day, and Thou causest the day to succeed the night: Thou bringest forth the living out of the dead, and Thou bringest forth the dead out of the living and thou art the provider of sustenance to whom Thou wilt, without measure."( Koran: 3: 26-27)*

**3- Good and evil deeds:**

*"Say, whether ye conceal that which is in your hearts, or whether ye show it, God knoweth it: He knoweth whatever is in heaven and whatever is on earth: and He is the Almighty. On the Day of Judgment, every soul shall find present and be happy with the good which it wrought while the evil which it wrought, will cause it such a disgrace, that it shall wish that was a vast distance between itself and that evil." ( Koran: 3: 29-30)*

**4- Belief of the faithful:**

*"The Apostle (Mohammad) believeth in that which hath been sent down unto him from his Lord, as do the faithful (also). Every one (of them) believeth in God and His Angels, and His Scriptures, and His Apostles: We make no distinction between any of His Apostles. And they say 'We have listened, and so we obey. Thy mercy, O Lord, for unto Thee (O Lord) must we return.' God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it hath gained, and shall bear the evil which it hath wrought. O Lord, punish us not, if we forget or fall into sin; O Lord, lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us, neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have no strength to bear, but be favorable onto us, and spare us, and be merciful unto us. Thou art our patron, help us therefore against the unbelieving people." ( Koran: 2: 285-286)*

With regard to the New Testament, Muslims hold the belief that, although God revealed the Gospel to His Messenger Jesus Christ, the so called gospels ascribed to the four saints do not represent the true word of

God as revealed to the Teacher of Nazareth. With Muslims these books are more historical works, dealing with the history of Jesus, and they contradict each other in certain statements. Three of the authors of the four Gospels did not see Jesus at all. (1) St. Mark did not see Jesus, until the year he was taken up to heaven. After the ascension of Jesus, St. Mark wrote in the city of Alexandria, his gospel, in which be gave an account of the birth and life of the Master of Christianity, mentioning several events which are not to be traced in the other three gospels. (2) St. Luke also did not see Jesus, but he was converted to Christianity by St. Paul, the latter being an Israelite who himself had not seen Jesus, but was converted by St. Ananias. (3) St. Matthew also did not see Jesus, but was converted to the Christian faith by St. Peter, some time after the ascension of Jesus; he took his gospel from St. Peter in the city of Rome. St Matthews' Gospel contradicts several statements of the other three Gospels.

St. John was the nephew of Jesus. It was at the wedding of John that Jesus converted Water into Wine. Witnessing this miracle, John immediately became a Christian proselyte, left his wife and followed Jesus. He was the author of the fourth gospel, called after him, written in the Greek language, in the city of Ephesus.

These are the four gospels of the Christian New Testament, although Muslims do not believe them to contain the uncorrupted word of God. They are nothing more than biographic works which are liable to defects and errors. There was but one Gospel, namely, the "Evangel" which God vouchsafed to give to Jesus, for him to preach to the Israelites. The Book containing the True Word of God must be free from all discrepancies; yet it is written in St. Mark's gospel, that in the book of the Prophet Isaiah it was said by God: 'I have sent an Angel before Thy face', namely, before the face of Jesus; where the Words are not in the book of Isaiah, but in that of Malachi (see St. Mark.) Again it is related in St. Matthew's gospel (Matt. xii. 40) that Jesus said 'My body will remain in the belly of the earth three days and three nights after my death, just as Jones was in the whale's belly', and it is evident this was not true, for St. Matthew himself agrees with the three other writers of the gospels, that Jesus died at the sixth hour on Friday, and was buried at the first hour of the night and rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, so that he remained in the belly of the earth two nights only.

## ISLAM AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

As already pointed out, Muslims do not admit the authenticity of the Gospels, or the creed contained therein, or the leading events in the life of the Holy Prophet Jesus, as depicted by these same Gospels. In this attitude Muslims are supported by the scholarly researches of devout Christians even.

It seems, however that the laity in Christendom is generally as ignorant with regard to these vital questions, as non-Christians, to whom Christian literature is inaccessible in the main. A brief account of these questions is, therefore, likely to be of interest and use.

According to the doctrines of Islam, the four Gospels are not revealed by God. Nor was it the Holy Ghost that moved the writers of the said Gospels to write them. But it was the example of other writers that inspired them with the desire of compiling brief biographies of Jesus.

**1- St. Luke's Gospel**

St. Luke's own words to this effect are:

> *"For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth, in order, a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us."*
>
> *"Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitness, and ministers of the word."*
>
> *"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things, from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."*
>
> *"That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."* St. Luke: i-4.

St. Luke has very plainly set forth the grounds of his inspiration, namely: (1) the example of other writers of Jesus' life (2) his consciousness of possessing "perfect understanding of all things from the

first"; and (3) to impart reliable information to Theophilus. Thus, St. Luke does not call his Gospel a divine revelation, but he claims for it, (a) diligence in collecting all available material, (b) fullness, (c) careful investigation, (d) orderly arrangement and (e) accuracy.

The Rev. Grieve, M.A.,D.D., Principal of the Congregational Hall, Edinburgh, and a joint Editor of Peake's famous Commentary, explains Luke's preface in the following words: 1. 1-4 "The writer, influenced by the attempts of others, to record the primitive tradition of Christianity, as it was handed down by the first generation of disciples, essays the same task, and having taken pains to collect, examine, sift and arrange the contents of the written oral tradition, presents the result to Theophilus, a Roman official of some standing, a literary patron of the Evangelists who needed fuller acquaintance with the historic basis of the oral teaching about Christianity which he had received."(1)

God reveals books for the guidance of a nation or nations, as the case may be, but St. Luke dedicates his books to the most excellent Theophilus.

The Encyclopedia Biblica throws further light on this dedication: "The dedication of Luke (I. 1-4) shows that we have passed into a new literary province. The Muratorian fragment calls attention to the fact that the author writes in his own name, a novelty among Evangelists. He also dedicates his work to someone who, if not an imaginary 'God beloved' would appear to be a patron, a man of rank. The apostles - the (1-2) 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' - appear to have delivered their testimony by oral tradition and to have passed away. To supply their places, (1-i) 'many' had attempted to draw up a formal narrative concerning the matters fully established in the Church. These writers had clearly not been eyewitnesses nor were they, in Luke's judgment so successful as to make unnecessary any further attempts. Apparently they had failed in the three points, in which he hopes to excel: (1) they had not traced everything up to the source, and this (2), as far as it went, not 'accurately' and (3) they had not written 'in order'."(2)

(1) Peake's Commentary, p. 725.
(2) Encyclopedia Biblica p. 1790.

The same book further discusses the point whether or not the work of St. Luke's justifies the claim of that Apostle: "We are led to the conclusion that, though Luke attempted to write 'accurately' and in 'order', yet he could not always succeed. When deciding between an earlier and a later date, between this and that place and occasion, between metaphor and literalism, between what Jesus himself said and what he said through his disciples, he (Luke) had to be guided by evidence which sometimes led him aright, but not always."[1]

We further read in the same work: "Luke's absolute omission of genuine and valuable traditions especially in connection with Christ's appearance to women after the Resurrection, and with Christ's promise to go to 'Galilee' ... seriously diminishes the value of his work. It is probably the best adapted for making converts, but if bold bare facts are in question it is probably the least authority of the Four.[2]

Luke's failure has evidently been ascribed to his attempts being human, and his sources mortal which could 'not always' guide him aright. If his work had been revealed, he could not have been accused of having omitted some most important incidents, or of his book being "the least authoritative."

The quotations cited above clearly buttress the Islamic belief that the Christian gospels are but human attempts to draw up accounts of the life of Jesus, and as such are neither complete nor satisfactory. Revelation alone can make a recipient immune from error; for it suspends, for the time being, all other mental activity of the person, upon whom the Word of God descends. His Word and Will were revealed to holy prophets, like Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. But the followers of Jesus were animated, or inspired, to compile what was already known to them. They had but to collect, sift and arrange the material which was in the possession of the people. As such the works of the Apostles are necessarily characterized by mortal shortcomings. Even the devout Christian scholar admits it, and is ready to bear testimony to the fact that the record of the gospels is not altogether complete and reliable. We cannot do better than quote some of the most scholarly and popularly admitted opinions which carry weight and conviction in this connection.

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(1) Encyclopedia Biblica p. 1790.
(2) Encyclopedia Biblica p. 1793.

The Rev. Dummelow, M.A., expresses his opinion as follows:

"Speaking broadly, the Christians mean by their inspiration, an impulse from God, causing 'certain persons to write, and directing them how to write, for the edification of others.' Though it is closely connected with revelation, it is not identical with it. By revelation, God makes known to a soul, truths which were unknown to it before. But it is not at all necessary, that an inspired writer should receive any new truths by way of revelation. Thus St. Mark was inspired to write his Gospel, but he was inspired to write down truths which were already familiar to him and to others through the instruction given by St. Peter."[1]

**2 - The Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. Mark.**

The foregoing also applies to both St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels. "St. Mark is the oldest of the Synoptists, and has been used by St. Matthew and St. Luke, who have incorporated the bulk of his Gospel into their own with comparatively few alterations."[2]

It is thus plain, that Christian scholars of sacred literature do not claim divine origin for Christian Gospels. They, on the other hand, admit that the said books were compiled by mere men who were by no means experts. They were consequently liable to mistakes. I quote the Rev. Dummelow once more on this point:

"We must not regard the Bible as an absolutely perfect book, in which God is Himself the author, using human hands and brains only as a man may use a typewriter... Their inspiration did not involve a suspension of their natural faculties, nor abolish the differences of training and character; it did not even make them perfectly free from earthy passion. Therefore, we find that their knowledge sometimes is no higher than their contemporaries, and their indignation against oppression and wrongdoing sometimes breaks out into desire of revenge. It surprises us in the Bible, because of our false theory of Verbal Inspiration."[3]

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(1) The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary p. 71.
(2) The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary p. 133.
(3) The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary p. 71.

The same commentary further throws light upon the insufficiency and incompleteness of these sacred records, and thus precludes any chance of their claiming divine origin. "Today we realize, that the life of Jesus can never be written. The material is wanting. Neither in quality, nor in extent, do the Gospels satisfy the requirements of a modern biography. At best, they offer us certain memorabilia of the public ministry of Jesus, hardly adequate to construct the story of the year or years, during which he evangelized his people, and barely sufficing to mirror the chief features of his message. Where the modern mind is most curious, the Gospels seem to be least communicative. Men would fain trace the development of innermost convictions which condition his activity as a prophet. But the facts that the Gospels tell us little or nothing of the early life of Jesus, and that almost every story consists of a simple record of outward act and utterance, with few hints as to inward feeling or historical setting, seeming at first sight to defeat the hopes of analyzing motive, and tracing growth."(1)

**3- The four Gospels.**

Dealing with the sources of the four Gospels of the Christian faith, the Encyclopaedia Biblica comments as follows:

"These documents are of varying value from a historical point of view. Critical opinion is much divided as to the fourth, that which bears the name of John, the judgment of many critics being, that it is the least trustworthy a source, whether for words or for the acts of Jesus. By comparison, the first three, from their resemblances called synoptical, are regarded by many as possessing a considerable measure of historical worth, but even these, from a critical point of view, are not of equal value, nor do the contents of any of them possess a uniform degree of historical probability. They present to the critic a curious, interesting, and perplexing problem, still far from final solution. By their resemblances and differences, agreements and disagreements, they raise many questions as to origin, relative dates, and literary connections, which have called forth a multitude of conflicting hypotheses and a most extensive critical literature."(2)

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Encyclopaedia Biblica'.

In the opinion of the best English scholars of the New Testament, the Gospels are not to be looked upon as revealed books, the sole source of which should have been God and not man. But they are to be regarded, on the other hand, as inadequate attempts, made by pious but not talented followers of Christ, at the description of his life. It is a great pity, that the world never availed itself of the collection of those life inspiring words that were uttered by the Holy Prophet of Nazareth. However, piety and veneration, for a long time, assured the credulity of the early Christians, that the Gospels revealed the Word of God, and in consequence were infallible. There was a time, when every article of it was firmly and reverently believed to have directly proceeded from God[1]. In short, what had been written by man, passed for the word of God. This is clear to those clergy who have undergone university training. But the pity of it is they have not the moral courage to enlighten their congregation on the subject. It would only seem, that pious anxiety dictates, that a character of infallibility should still be given to what has been written by human hands, and that crude attempts at the biography of the Holy Prophet of Nazareth, should continue to be believed to have been revealed by God Himself.

Anyhow, what scholarship and research have now brought to light, was revealed over thirteen centuries ago in the Koran:

> *"Do they not know, that God knows, what they keep secret, and what they make known; and there are among them ignorant who know not the Book, but only idle stories, and they do but conjecture, woe, then, to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: This is from God, so that they may obtain therewith a small gain; therefore, woe to them, for what their hands have written and woe to them, for what they have earned."*[2]

Dr. Murray's illustrated 'Bible Dictionary' which is a valuable commentary, enlightens us thus;

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(1) Dr. Ph. Schaff's Companion to the Greek Testaments and the English version pp. 88 & 89.

(2) Sale's translation of the Holy Koran: ch.2: 77-79.

Gospels: - "The first point which attracts our notice in reading the Gospels is that the first three Gospels are distinct from the fourth. The first three Gospels confine themselves almost exclusively to the events which took place in Galilee, until Christ's last Journey to Jerusalem. If we had three Gospels alone, we could not definitely say, that our Lord went to Jerusalem during his ministry, until he went there to die. The difference in character is no less, than the difference in scene. Further, the synoptists do not claim to be eyewitnesses of our Lord's work; the first three Gospels are usually called the synoptic Gospels. It is obvious that not only do all the three synoptic Gospels differ from John, but they differ widely from each other. The account of the birth and infancy of Christ in Matthew differs widely from that in Luke. The incidents of the temptation of our Lord are recorded in a different order in Matthew and Luke, and the temptation is recorded without these incidents in Mark. All three Gospels give a slightly different account of the inscription on the cross, and the words spoken by the centurion at the death of Jesus, vary in Luke from the words in Matthew and Mark. Also the language differs and differs in a very singular manner."(1)

From the above quotation it is very clear, that the material for Mark's Gospel was supplied by St. Peter's preaching, and that Mark was freely drawn upon by Matthew and Luke; which establishes the fact, that the synoptic Gospels are no revelation at all, but are purely and simply human compilations, it remains to deal with St. John's Gospel.

The Twentieth Century New Testament makes the following observation on John;

"The writer apparently proposed to himself to illustrate the spirit of the 'Gospel of Love' by such incidents in the life of Jesus, as best suited his purpose. There is no attempt at a regular connected narrative; and the writer allows himself such freedom, in commenting upon the teaching of Jesus, that it is not always easy to all where that teaching ends and the writer's comments begin. It is to the great struggle between Light and Darkness, Death and Life - words much in use and much debated in the current philosophy of Ephesus - that the writer devotes his attention, rather than to the external incidents of a story which has already been

(1) Murray's Bible dictionary.

told, and which is plainly viewed by him from a greater distance of time. That is the case with the compilers of the three other Gospels."[1]

Another eminent authority, namely Dr. Weymouth, in his Introduction to John, observes:

"It must be owned that, although the fourth Gospel makes no assertion which contradicts the character of Teacher and Reformer attributed to Him by the synoptists, it presents to us a personage so enwrapped in mystery and dignity, as altogether to transcend ordinary human nature. This transcendent personality is, indeed, the avowed centre of the whole record, and his portrayal is its avowed purpose."[2]

Now, these quotations point very clearly to the fact that there is a general agreement as to John having played the role of an interpreter or a commentator of the three other Gospels. There is not an allusion or a reference made to John having received a revelation from Heaven, or having been inspired to furnish the world with an explanation of the doctrines of Christ. We learn on the other hand, that, while the authors of the three other Gospels compiled the incidents of the life of Jesus, John gave a mystical meaning to them. He himself does not lay claim to revelation, or to consequent perfection. He has, on the contrary confessed the imperfection of his attempts, to depict the incidents of the life of Jesus. Likewise, he admits that he is but a recorder of incidents or signs. 'There were also a great number of signs which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book; but these have been recorded, in order that you may believe, that he is the Christ, the son of God, and that, through believing, you may have Life through his name.'[3] This text, which reveals the object of the fourth Gospel, announces that this is a partial record of some of those signs which Jesus performed before his disciples. To record events or signs which are known to many, or all, of the disciples and others does not require the aid of revelation which supplies information which is not already in the possession of human beings.

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(1) The 20th Century New Testament.

(2) Dr. Weymouth's Introduction to St. John's Gospel.

(3) John XX:30.

## SOME IMPORTANT DISCREPANCIES.

Jesus said to them (who took offence at him and who were not prepared to recognize his claims simply because he was a carpenter's son and had other humble ties): "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." (Mark) This statement was curtailed by Matthew, and still more by John. Luke ignored it altogether.

"But of the day and that hour knoweth no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark xiii, 32) This text embodies a confession by Jesus, eloquent of his limited knowledge and avowed ignorance; while Luke and John, however make no mention of that humiliating reference.

The Rev. Dummelow's commentary makes the following remark on "Neither the Son": "This is the true reading not only here (in Mark) but in Matthew xxiv, 36, where it has been altered in many MSS., probably as being a difficulty to faith."

Peake's Commentary offers the following note on it

"Mark xiii. 32 - This is one of 'Schmiedel's pillar-passages.' A passage admitting a limit to Christ; knowledge must be trustworthy history, according to Schmiedel. Certainly later commentators found the verse difficult."

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark xv. 34) These words have been copied by Matthew only. They picture the inborn weakness of Jesus. This expression of his human nature was unworthy of record, in the opinion of Luke and John.

## INTERPOLATIONS

Of many interpolations, mention will be made here of a few only:

A) John vii. 53 and viii. 1-11, that is, the last verse of the seventh chapter, with its continuation in the first eleven verses of the eighth

chapter, which relate the story of an adulteress, is an interpolation. This is admitted universally. The Rev. Dummelow's Commentary has the following observations on it: "The woman taken in adultery. All modern critics agree that this section (vii. 53-viii. 1-11) is no original part of the fourth Gospel. It is not in the author's style; it breaks the sequence of our Lord's discourses, and is omitted by most of the ancient authorities."

Peake's commentary comments on the story at the end of John vii. 53-vii-1-11, Jesus, and the woman accused of sin: "The well known story of the woman taken in adultery has no claim to be regarded as part of the original text of this... It is supported by no early Patristic evidence. The evidence proves it to be an interpolation of a 'western' character."

Dr. Weymouth's 'New Testament in modern English' marks the section as an interpolation. 'The Twentieth Century New Testament' has excised it, and placed it in such a place as indicates clearly, that it has no connection with John. 'The Complete Bible in Modern English' writes in a footnote: "The narrative of the sinful woman (chap. vii 53 to viii-1-11) is rejected by the most competent authorities as a spurious interpolation."

B) John xxi:-In the opinion of the Rev. Dummelow, the last two verses at least - 24 and 25 - are really doubtful, and they "may have been added by the Ephesians elders, who first put the Gospel in circulation after the death of the Apostle, and who wished to testify to its genuineness and trustworthiness."

C) Mark xvi. 9-20 is another interpolation. Dummelow's commentary observes that, "Internal evidence points definitely to the conclusion that the last twelve verses are not by St. Mark." It further supplies the following information on the subject: "When at the close of the apostolic age, an attempt was made (probably in Rome) to collect the authentic memorials of the Apostles and their companions, a copy of the neglected second Gospel not easily found. The one that was actually discovered, and was used to multiply copies, had lost its last leaf, and so a fitting termination (the present appendix) was added by another hand."

The unanimous verdict given in the New Testaments of Dr. Weymouth, Dr. Moffal, Ferrar Fenlon, and in the Twentieth Century New Testament, is that Mark VXI-9-20, is an addition.

D) Luke xxiv. 51 is another interpolation, as is conceded on all hands. It elicits the following comment from the Rev. Dummelow: "A few ancient authorities omit these words. If they are omitted, it is possible to regard this event, not as the ascension, but as a miraculous disappearance of Jesus at the end of the interview begun in verse 36."

Peake's commentary makes similar remarks; "The words 'and was carried up into heaven' are omitted in some of the best Mss... and have probably crept in from Acts. i. 9 f."

The Twentieth Century New Testament and Dr. Moffat's "New Testament" mark it as an interpolation.

## ASCENSION

Our co-religionists Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din, B.A., from whose interesting essay, "Are the Gospels inspired?"[1], I have chiefly reproduced the above chapter, makes the following conclusion to his work:

"If according to Christ and Mohammed (peace be upon them and all the other prophets), the essence of religion lies in our perfect love of God, which can only be manifested in our willing obedience to His Divine will, we must be assured, as rational beings, of the genuineness and credibility of God's message, as much as of the soundness of the truth, that it reveals. It is this natural craving, that had led to what is known as the higher criticism of the Bible. A similar test has been applied to the Holy Koran as well, to which reference has been made previously. The result of the higher criticism of the four Gospels has partially been presented in this treatise, with the object of making the laity and non-Christians in general acquainted with it. In doing so, I have purposely refrained from quoting the opinions expressed in the learned commentaries of the non-conformists, and in the books issued on the subject by the Rational Press. I have, on the contrary, restricted the treatment to the views expounded by the Clergy of the Church of

(1) For a fuller treatment of the subject of the higher criticism of the New Testament see a very interesting treatise entitled 'Are the Gospels inspired?' by Maulvi Sadar-ud-Din, B.A., from whose work the foregoing passage has been chiefly reproduced.

England, in the main, and to the views of those who are rather conservative. I have also deliberately overlooked the question, whether we can ascribe with certainty the authorship of the Gospels to the Evangelists, whose names they bear now. All the commentaries are agreed upon the fact that the original copies of the Gospel were without indication as to the authors' names. It was guessed, later, who were the most probable writers of them. The probable conjecture has not yet reached certainty. The authenticity of the names to which the Gospels are attributed, is open to doubt as can be seen by referring to any commentary."

What we have learnt with respect to the origin of the Christian Gospels, and the creed preached therein, can be recapitulated in a few words. Mark was the first Gospel, and not Matthew as is generally indicated by the present arrangement of the four books. Mark, who was a convert and interpreter of St. Peter, penned at the instance of 'his hearers', what St. Peter had adopted and preached to his Roman audiences. Mark has been incorporated into Matthew and Luke. But Matthew has represented the words and works of Jesus as fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament. No less than sixty-five references have been made to Old Testament texts, to establish that the advent of the Messiah was in strict accordance with the Jewish ideals. This conception and purpose pervade the whole of Matthew, and distinguish it from the other three. Luke represents St. Paul's views, which are in conflict with St. Peter's. Thus we have in Luke an altogether different point of view. It opposes Matthew and Mark most boldly, and places its literal and Catholic description of Christianity in a striking contrast to Matthew and Mark, who confine God's blessings and ministrations to the elect alone. John strikes an entirely different note. He offers to interpret Christianity for us. We may respect his opinion, as an individual one, and as different from the other three; but we cannot be assured that his vague and mythical representation of Christianity is identical with the definite and plain teachings of the holy Prophet Jesus. In a word, the Gospels are as divergent, in expressing the Christian doctrines, as their versions are discrepant, in the reproduction of the words and works of Jesus. They have not been safeguarded against mistakes and interpolations. On the contrary, they are replete with extraneous matter. Sometimes glosses and editorial notes have been absorbed in the body of the book, and

sometimes irrelevant additions have been made. Matthew and Luke have either toned down or omitted what they deemed objectionable in Mark. They do not teach that, because the deepening anxiety of Jesus, in alliance with a fear of treacherous betrayal on the part of some of his disciples that led to his sudden and skillfully planned disappearance, we should believe that he soared upwards to heaven. Their accounts of the incident of the crucifixion do not show that God saved Jesus from the cursed death on the cross. The plain and useful teachings of Jesus, as pronounced in the Gospels, however make the belief in the atoning and propitiating powers of the crucifixion unnecessary. His disciples also betray total ignorance of such a dogma as the vicarious atonement. Jesus himself believed in one God, worshipped Him, and prayed to Him and laid all possible stress on good living and cherishing love for one's neighbors.

This brings the treatment to a close, with my sincerest hopes that it will be of some interest and benefit to God's people.

## THE KORAN

As to the Koran, it consists exclusively of the revelation or commands which the Prophet professed to have received from time to time, as a message direct from God; and which, under divine direction, the Prophet delivered to those about him.

Every syllable of the Koran is of divine origin, eternal and 'uncreated' as the Deity Himself. It is one of the Mohammedan arguments against the Jewish and Christian Scriptures that they are not exclusively oracles professing to proceed from God.

The Prophet himself neither read nor wrote. His being an illiterate man, enhances the marvel of his revelation.[(1)] 'Learning,' says the Rev. Margoliouth, 'he had none, or next to none.'[(2)]

At the moment of inspiration or shortly after, each passage was

(1) Sir. W. Muir. Life of Mohammad.

(2) The Rev. Margoliouth's introduction to Rodwell's translation of the Koran.

recited by the Prophet in the presence of friends or followers, and was generally committed to writing by someone amongst them, at the time or afterwards, upon palm-leaves, leather, stones, or such other rude material as conveniently came to hand. These divine messages continued throughout the twenty-three years of his prophetic life, so that the last portion was not received till near the time of his death.

The Koran, being the divine revelation and the cornerstone of Islam, the recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer, public and private; and its perusal and repetition were considered to be a great privilege. The preservation of the various chapters during the lifetime of the Prophet was not altogether dependent on their being committed to writing. The Koran was committed to memory by so many adherents of Islam, and the extent to which it could be recited was one of the chief sources of distinction in the early stages of Islam. Amongst a crowd of warrior martyrs, he who had been the most versed in the Koran was honored with the first burial. The person who in any company could most faithfully repeat the Koran, was ipso facto entitled to conduct the public prayers, and in certain cases to pecuniary rewards.

The retentive faculty of the early Arabs favored the task; and it was applied, with all the ardor of an awakened spirit, to the Koran. Several of the Prophet's followers could, during his lifetime, repeat with scrupulous accuracy, the whole as then in use. Four or five such persons are named; and several others also who could very nearly repeat the whole, before the Prophet's death.(1)

"However retentive the Arab memory," remarks Sir William Muir, "we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Koran, or nearly the whole, were during his lifetime made by the Prophet's followers."

"Such was the condition of the text during Mohammad's lifetime, and such it remained for about a year after his death, imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary transcripts increasing daily."(2)

(1) Sir. Muir's Life of Mohammed.
(2) Ibid.

Further the same writer states: "The contents and arrangement of the Koran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments have with artless simplicity, been joined together..."

"Even the frailties of the Prophet, as noticed by the Deity, have with evident faithfulness been entered in the Koran..."

"In fine, we possess every interred guarantee of confidence (namely in the authenticity of the Koran, as it exists in the present copy)."

"... There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mohammad himself gave forth and used."

"So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved that there are no variations of importance - we might almost say no variations at all - to be found in the innumerable copies scattered throughout the vast bounds of the Empire of Islam."

"Yet, but One Koran has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by all of the same Scripture, in every age to the present day, is an irrefragable proof, that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the unfortunate Caliph Othman who was murdered some time after the compilation of the Koran."(1)

There is probably in the world no other work, which has remained twelve centuries (1861), with so pure a text. This is only because the various revelations in the Koran, regarding its divine nature, and its remaining for ever free from corruption or contradiction, are rightly confirmed. Here are a few verses bearing on this point:-

> *"We have surely sent down the Koran; and we will certainly preserve the same from corruption." (Koran: 15:9)*

> *"This Koran could not have been composed by any, except God; but it is a confirmation of that which was revealed before it, and an explanation of the scriptures; there is no doubt thereof;*

(1) Sir. Muir's Life of Mohammed.

*sent down from the Lord of all creatures. Will they say, (Mohammad) hath forged it? Answer, Bring therefore a chapter like unto it; and call whom ye may (to your assistance), besides God, if ye speak truth." (Koran: 10: 37-38)*

*"Say, Verily if men and genii were purposely assembled, that they might produce (a book) like this Koran, they could not produce one like unto it, although they assisted each other. And we have variously propounded unto men in this Koran, every kind of figurative argument; but the greater part of men refuse to receive it, merely out of infidelity." (Koran: 17: 87-88)*

The Rev. Rodwell states: "It must be acknowledged too, that the Koran deserves the highest praise for its conception of the divine nature, in reference to the attributes of Power, Knowledge and universal Providence and Unity, that its belief and trust in the One God of Heaven and Earth, is deep and fervent."[1]

"It is due to the Koran, that the occupants, in the sixth century, of an arid peninsula, whose poverty was only equaled by their ignorance, have become not only the fervent and sincere votaries of a new creed, but like Amru and many more, its propagators."[2]

"The simple shepherds and wandering Bedouins of Arabia, are transformed, as if by a magician's wand, into the founders of empires, the builders of cities, the collectors of more libraries, than they at first destroyed, while cities like Fostat, Baghdad, Cordova and Delhi, attest the power at which Christian Europe trembled. And thus, while the Koran, which underlies this energy and contains the principles which are its springs of action, reflects to a great extent the mixed character of its author, its merit as a code of laws, and as a system of religious teaching, must always be estimated by the changes which it introduced into the customs and beliefs of those who willingly or by compulsion, embraced it. In the suppression of their idolatries, in the substitution of the worship of Allah for that of the powers of nature and genii with Him, in the abolition of child murder, in the extinction of manifold superstitious

(1) Rodwell's Life of Mohamed'.
(2) Ibid.

usages, in the reduction of the number of wives to a fixed standard, it was to the Arabians an unquestionable blessing, and a revelation of Truth; and while every Christian must deplore the overthrow of so many flourishing eastern churches by the arms of the victorious Muslims, it must not be forgotten that Europe, in the middle ages, owed much of her knowledge of dialectic philosophy, of medicine and architecture to Arabian writers and the Muslims formed the connecting link between the West and the East for the importation of numerous articles of luxury and use..."

"For if he (Mohammad) was indeed the illiterate person the Muslims represent him to have been, then it will be hard to escape their inference, that the Koran is, as they assert it to be, a standing miracle."(1)

## THE KORANIC CONCEPTION OF MAN

The Holy Koran represents man as a free and responsible being, gifted with the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong. Then according to the Koran, man is capable of obeying the law of God. He needs nobody to atone for his sins, but himself; for the Lord is merciful and will forgive him his sins. The Holy Book of Islam mentions no original sin which we inherit at our birth. It does not represent man as coming into the world with a load of sin on his back. On the contrary, it represents him as an unconscious Muslim at the moment of creation. The Prophet of Islam says: "Every child is born with a Muslim heart", and it is the external influences that make it what it becomes afterwards in life. If bad influences happen to be at work, the child generally surrenders to such influences, unless God Himself undertakes to nurture the little soul. When the child grows into manhood, he may use the God-gifted faculty of discrimination and may become what he chooses in life. Indeed, God gives him many a chance in life, that he may recover himself from sin and iniquity. He may make or mar his fortune, even in the spiritual sense. If in him, Faith asserts its power, if true repentance places him in the right attitude towards God, if the spirit of God impels him to do virtuous deeds, if he feels the hand of God working in the smallest concerns of his life, and, above all, if he accepts death with a smiling countenance, and

(1) Cf. Rodwell's Life of Mohammed.

loses himself to save himself, why this is sufficient atonement in the sight of the Lord, whose pre-eminent attribute is mercy.

To understand the Koranic conception of man, a reference to the following verses is necessary:

> *"Of goodliest fabric We created man, then brought him, down to be the lowest of the low; save who believe and do things that are right, for theirs shall be a reward that faileth not."*
>
> *(Koran: 95: 4-6)*

These verses indicate that man, at the moment of his creation, is perfectly sinless. It is afterwards, that sin tries to assert itself and bring him down to the level of the brutes. But he also has the divine in him, the power to offer, if he so wills, a stubborn resistance; and by the help of this power, he may "grow up to a saint." Although his own force is feeble, there is the Spirit of God, which will cooperate with him in this work of self-regeneration, only if he genuinely desires to turn to God, to believe, and to do things that are right. The Holy Koran is very clear on this point. It does not ask us to believe in the doctrine of original sin; atonement, in a Christian sense, has no place in the Islamic Scripture. What God wants of us, is this, we for our part, should make the utmost endeavor to secure His pleasure and grace, while He for His part, undertakes to direct us into His way. "And whose maketh his utmost endeavor towards Us, We will surely direct him into Our ways," says the Koran. This utmost endeavor on our part to reach God involves the idea of personal atonement and sacrifice, which the Muslim is required to offer. We find the same thought clearly expressed elsewhere in the Word of God:

> *"They who set their face with resignation God-ward, and do what is right, - their reward is with their Lord; no fear shall come on them, neither shall they be grieved." (Koran: 2: 112)*

Turning his face towards God, gradually proceeding towards Him, till he realizes himself in Him, herein lies the salvation of man according to the Koran. The Muslim is taught the high truth that, *"the good drives away the evil in man,"* and so he requires not anyone, to take the burden of his sin and to undergo punishment as his substitute.

He develops his faculties, and tries his very best to make use of them in doing good deeds and working out the will of his Maker; and hopes that his little will be accepted as much by the Merciful Lord.

Everywhere, in the Holy Koran, man is represented as the crown and glory of creation. He is the central figure of this beautiful universe. In Adam, he is God's vice-regent on earth. Out of love God hath created man.

> *"And He hath created for him the heavens and the earth, and sendeth down water from the heaven, and so bringeth forth the fruits for his food. And to him He hath subjected the ships, so that by His command they pass through the sea; and to him He hath subjected the sun and the moon in their constant courses; and to him He hath subjected the day and the night; of everything which he may ask Him, giveth He to him; and if man would reckon up the favors of God, man can never count them".(14: 32-34)*

> *"And the cattle, for you He created them; from them ye have warm garments, and they are useful in many ways; and of them ye eat; and they obey you well when ye fetch them home ye drive them forth to pasture: and they carry your burdens to lands which ye could not else reach, but with travail of soul: truly, your Lord is full of goodness, and merciful: And He hath given you horses, mules and asses, that ye may ride them, and for your pleasure: And things, of which ye have no knowledge, hath He created. It is God who shows the right way, since some other ways are misleading. Some (of you) turn aside from it; but had He pleased, He would have guided you all aright."*[1] [2]

According to the Koran, God hath endowed us with the power of self government which is an almost incredible trust. By this power, God not only trusts our destinies to ourselves, but He actually trusts, or seems to trust, the whole final outcome of His creative work to our treatment of it. This earth, at least, is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and of ourselves, its inhabitants. It is stored with all possible help to us, in natural forces and materials; we are given intelligence, to find them out and to use

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(1) Koran: 16: 5-9.
(2) i.e. were it not that God has given man free will to choose between right and wrong (Author).

them for the enrichment and beautifying of our lives; we are given the understanding of a Rule of Right in our conduct towards each other, that will keep us in perfect harmony and happiness together, for the common good; we are given a complete code of regulations, to guide us as to what is right and what is wrong; we are drawn towards well-doing, in accord with the Rule of Right, by a feeling created in us, which will not let us forget it or violate it, without willful intent, but (and here lies the grandeur of the part man performs in creation) we are trusted with the freedom, to do with all this what we will. The outcome, good or evil, is what we and our fellows of the human race, past and future, are helping, or have helped, or will help, to make it. The glory of triumph or the shame of failure in the creation of mankind is to belong to the race itself.

## THE REALITIES OF HUMAN NATURE

The Koran also dwells on the weaknesses, to which the flesh is heir, and constantly reminds man of his inconstancy, injustice and ingratitude. "Man is created weak." "Surely man is unjust and ungrateful." "Man is hasty." "Man is covetous." "Verily, man is created extremely impatient." "Verily, man is ungrateful unto his Lord." It must, however, not be inferred from verses like these, that man stands condemned before his Creator, as deserving only death and perdition. These verses rather breathe a noble sympathy for the weakness of man and the infirmities of the flesh. They contain in them promises of God's grace and forgiveness. In reminding man of the infirmities of his nature, God desires that man should realize his weakness and powerlessness, bow down his head before the Lord, turn to Him for strength and assistance, and pray constantly, that He may guide him into the right, straight path. Indeed, the Muslim is enjoined to throw himself in this attitude towards his Maker, and to offer such prayers repeatedly day and night. He is taught to say:

> *"Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds; the Compassionate, the Merciful, King of the day of Reckoning. Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us in the right path, the path of those, unto whom Thou hast been gracious; - and not of those, who are convicted nor of those who go astray."*[1]

(1) This is the prayer with which the Holy Book of Islam opens.

As will be seen, this human prayer is full of sympathy towards the weakness of man. In it the Lord teaches His servants, to beg of Him spiritual blessings. In it He indirectly asks them not to sink in despair, and indirectly promises, to guide them into the path of holiness and to give them strength, to bear the yoke of His law. What an uplifting hope is breathed into our hearts, when He tells us that He was gracious in the past, unto those who sought Him, and even so today He is ready to be gracious unto us, if we only turn to Him and look up to His Grace, as our true Savior.

But, as Shakespeare said: "The course of true love never did run smooth" with equal truth it may be said of divine love, that its course never runs smooth. Trials and tribulations are bound to come. Many a trial the seeker after God has to undergo, before he can expect to receive the grace of God.

> *"Think ye,"* says the Lord, *"to enter Paradise, when no such things have come upon you, as on those who flourished before you? Ills and troubles tried them; and so tossed were they by trials, that the Apostle and they who shared his faith, said: When will the help of God come? Surely the help of God is nigh!"*[1]

Even the Patriarch Abraham, was tried by God when He commanded him to leave his home and country, and to offer his beloved son as a sacrifice.

No doubt, it is rather a difficult task, to secure the blessings of God, and to perform the divine laws. But, let not man stagger under the difficulty of task that lies before him. Let him take courage, and with a firm trust in God and a cheerful heart, undertake the performance; and above all fear the Lord; for it is God's promise that "He will make His command easy to him who feareth Him." The God of Islam, it should always be remembered, is not a niggardly, exacting God, but "He is gracious unto His servants." Elsewhere we read a surpassingly comforting verse, which comes as a message of hope to each and all of us. "God desireth to be gracious unto you... God desireth, to make your

(1) Koran: 2: 214.

burden light: for man hath been created weak."[1] Again we read; "God wisheth you ease and never wisheth you discomfort." A world of mercy and forgiveness is surely concealed behind, and breathed out by these verses. God is offering His grace; we have only to throw ourselves in the right attitude of Faith, and give ourselves up to God, and His Hand will lead us to His blessings. We have but to confess our weakness and ask from our Lord power and strength, and His spirit will descend upon us.

There is another remarkable passage in the Holy Koran which presents to us a just, but at the same time a merciful God, and then gives a most beautiful prayer, so comforting to the helpless man who, toiling up the spiritual heights, sits down totally unnerved, looking up to God for strength and support:

> *"God will not burden any soul beyond its power,"* so run the words of God, *"It shall enjoy the good which it hath acquired, and shall bear the evil, for the acquirement of which it labored. Our Lord, punish us not if we forget, or fall into sin; Our Lord, lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us; neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have not the strength to bear; but blot out our sins, and forgive us, and have pity on us. Thou art our Patron; help us, therefore, against those who do not believe."*[2]

## THE KORAN AND THE DOCTRINE OF PERSONAL HOLINESS

Islam has taken due cognizance of the frailties of human nature, and this constitutes its chief excellence as a system of religion. Thus the laws of Islam exhibit an elasticity which is a proof of their beneficence and usefulness. Though Islam no doubt points to a lofty idealism, it is at the same time, thoroughly practical. The merit of Islam, as a religion, consists, in a happy harmonious blending of the ideal and the practical. It favors no form of asceticism, and never asks any man, to do what he has not the power to do. There is, however, one thing, on which it lays the

(1) Koran: 4: 28.
(2) Koran: 2: 285,286.

greatest emphasis. It is personal holiness, and purity of heart. It is the grand purpose, for which the Prophet was sent down, as it appears from the prayer of Abraham: "Our Lord, raise up among them an apostle who may rehearse Thy signs unto them, and teach them the Book, and the Wisdom, and purify them."[1] The reader will observe that the verse gradually ascends to a climax, purification of men being put last, as the most important part of the functions of the Prophet of Islam. "He who is purified, hath obtained felicity", says the Koran elsewhere.[2] Again, after mentioning the blessings of heavenly life, the Holy Book adds: "And this shall be the reward of him who shall be pure."[3] That a very important place is given to purity of mind and personal holiness, will be seen from another verse, where sinners are threatened with the punishment, that God shall neither speak unto them nor shall He purify them: "Moreover, they who conceal any part of the scripture which God hath sent down unto them - God shall not speak unto them, on the day of resurrection, neither shall He purify them, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment."[4] It is clear, then, that communion with the Deity and personal holiness are the keynote of Islam.

But even here, man is not held responsible for the evil thoughts that in spite of himself, pass through his mind like flashes of lightning. To render man responsible for such passing fancies, over which he has little control, would be sheer injustice. Commission of a wrong act, without previous intention and deliberation, does not make one a sinner, far less a passing thought that rises like a bubble only to die and disappear the next moment. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit and thereby committed a mistake, as all men are liable to commit mistakes; but he was never guilty of committing sin, and the Holy Koran clears him of the false accusation, just as it has cleared other prophets, like Moses and Jesus, of similar charges. For it says:

> *"We heretofore gave a command to Adam, and he forgot it; and We found no intention in him (to disobey) our command)."*[5]

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(1) Koran: 2: 129.
(2) Koran: 87:14.
(3) Koran: 20: 76.
(4) Koran: 2: 174.
(5) Koran: 20: 115.

This indeed, is an important principle and it has bearings on the doctrine of sin, as presented by the Holy Koran. For elsewhere we read: "*God will not punish you for an inconsiderate word in your oaths; but He will punish you for that which your hearts have assented unto it.*"(1) This verse clearly lays down, that a wrong act, or an evil thought is a sin, if it is deliberate. Shorn of intention and deliberation, a wrong act or an impure thought is a mere accident which, however deplorable, cannot prove the doer a guilty sinner in the sight of God.

But, if the element of intention is present, even the faintest thought is enough to render a man guilty before his Maker, not to speak of a deed which is manifestly wrong. God forbids both kinds of sin - open and secret equally in the same verse: "Draw not near unto sin; neither open nor secret."(2) "Leave both - the outside of iniquity and the inside thereof."(3)

Again: "Say, verily, my Lord hath forbidden sins, whether open or secret, and iniquity and unjust violence."(4)

These verses sufficiently establish the doctrine of personal holiness in Islam; but to crush the objection of the critics absolutely, we give one more verse which shows, that not only the eyes and the ears, but also the heart, will be required, to give evidence on the Day of Judgment, if any sin has been committed through them. And the verse is this: "And follow not that, whereof thou hast no knowledge; for the hearing and the sight and the heart - each of these shall be examined."(5)

Personal holiness, it must be remembered, depends largely on a thorough belief in the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God. And nothing is more striking to the reader of the Holy Koran, than the force with which it impresses upon us these two attributes of the Deity. The belief that the Supreme Being sees our actions and knows even the innermost secrets of our hearts, is a most powerful check upon the

(1) Koran: 2: 225.
(2) Koran: 6: 151.
(3) Koran: 6: 120.
(4) Koran: 7: 33.
(5) Koran: 17: 36.

tendency to commit sin. So long as a man realizes that he works and moves under the great Taskmaster eyes, he keeps himself from vice: but if this consciousness in him grows dim, and he thinks he is not watched by God, he exposes himself to constant danger.

### *4. Belief in the Apostles of God.*

The fourth article of the Mohammedan creed is faith in all the Apostles of God. A Muslim must believe, that the Merciful Creator sent in diverse ages certain messengers or apostles, to reclaim mankind from infidelity and superstition, and to teach them the religion and laws of God, and to give them good tidings and admonitions. The number of these apostles is given as 313.

Twenty five of them must be remembered, since their names are distinctly given in the Koran; but it is not necessary to learn them by heart. The following are the names, according to chronological order:- Adam, Noah, Houd (Heber), Saleh (Methuselah), Lot, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Shu'aib (Jethro), Haroun (Aaron), Moses, David, Solomon, Ayoub (Job), Zulkifl (Isaiah), Younis (Jonah), Elias, Alyas'aa (Elisha), Zacharias, Yehia (John the Baptist), Jesus and Mohammad.

If a Muslim is asked about anyone of these men, he must confess his belief, that he was an apostle of God.

Muslims must also believe that the apostles of God were truthful, faithful and intelligent, and that they delivered in full, God's message to their respective people. A Muslim must further believe, that all apostles of God were, by their prophetic characteristics, free from (1) telling lies, (2) committing unlawful deeds, (3) stupidity, laziness or cowardice, (4) and from concealing any part of the message they were ordered to deliver.

The apostles of God were subject to the same human wants as the rest of mankind, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, marrying, etc. They were also liable to ordinary but not disgusting maladies etc.

Since the nature, as well as the story, of Jesus Christ was a matter of dispute between Christians and Mohammedans, I must give a summary

of the Muslims' belief in this respect, according to the teachings of the Koran and the interpretation of the Prophet.

Muslims hold, that Jesus Christ was the blessed apostle of God who was sent to reclaim the people of Israel. He was a spirit from God, His messenger, His servant and prophet illustrious in this world and in the next. He was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary. The Jews having spoken ill of Mary and charging her with unchastity, Jesus Christ, speaking in the cradle, vindicated his mother's honor. Jesus performed miracles by God s Power; giving life to a clay figure of a bird, healing the blind, curing the leper, awakening the dead, and causing a table of food to be brought down from Heaven. He was sent by God, to confirm the Law of Moses, and to preach the Gospel to people of Israel. He proclaimed his mission by many manifest signs, being confirmed by the Holy Spirit. He foretold the advent of another apostle to succeed him, named Periclete or Ahmad. The Jews intended to crucify Jesus, but God saved him from the plot, took him up to Heaven and stamped his likeness on a treacherous Jew who was apprehended and crucified in his stead. It is the constant doctrine of the Muslims that it was not Jesus who underwent crucifixion, but someone else, resembling him in shape, namely, Judas, who agreed with the Jews, to betray Jesus for some pieces of silver, and led those who were sent to take him. After the crucifixion of the wicked Judas, and the taking up of Jesus into Heaven, Christ, the Apostle of God, was sent down again to the earth, to comfort his mother and devoted disciples and to tell them, how the Jews were deceived; and he was taken up a second time to Heaven.

"It is supported by several" writes Mr. G. Sale "that this story was an original invention of Mohammad's; but they are certainly mistaken; for several sectaries held the same opinion, long before his time. The Easilidians in the very beginning of Christianity, denied, that Christ himself suffered but that Simon the Cyrenean was crucified in his place. The Cerinthians before them, and the Carpocratians next, (to name no more of those who affirmed Jesus to have been a mere man) did believe the same thing; that it was not himself but one of his followers very like him, that was crucified. Photius tells us that he read a book entitled 'The Journey of The Apostles', relating the acts of Peter, John, Andrew Thomas and Paul; and among other things contained therein, this was

one, that Christ was not crucified but another in his stead, and that therefore, he laughed at his crucifiers or those who thought they had crucified him."[1]

St. Barnabas relates this part of Jesus Christ's history with circumstances approximating to the Mohammedan view. In that Gospel it is related, that: "the moment the Jews were going to apprehend Jesus in the garden, he was lifted up to heaven, by the ministry of four angels; that he will not die, till the end of the world, and that it was Judas who was crucified in his stead; God having permitted that traitor, to appear so like his master, in the eyes of the Jews, that they took and delivered him to Pilate. That this resemblance was so great, that it deceived the Virgin Mary and the disciples themselves; but that Jesus Christ afterwards obtained leave of God, to go and comfort them. That Barnabas having then asked him, why the divine goodness had suffered the mother and disciples of so holy a prophet, to believe, even for one moment, that he had died in so ignominious a manner, Jesus returned the following answer, "O Barnabas, believe me, that every sin, however small, is punished by God with great torment, because God is offended by sin. My mother, therefore, and faithful disciples, having loved me with a mixture of earthly love, the Just God has been pleased, to punish this love with their present grief, that they might not be punished for it hereafter in the flames of hell. And as for me, though I have myself been blameless in the world, yet other men having called me God and the son of God; therefore God, that I might not be mocked by the devils on the Day of Judgment, has been pleased, that in this world I should be mocked by men with the death of Judas, making every body believe that I died upon the cross. And hence it is that this mocking is to continue till the coming of Ahmad, the messenger into the world, who will undeceive everyone who shall believe in the law of God, from this error."[2]

The Muslims are also taught, that after Jesus had left this earth, his disciples disputed among themselves his nature, some calling him God and others the son of God. They believe that he will come again into the world, will slay the antichrist, and will reign as a just king for many years, marry and have children and die.

(1) See G Sale's, Translation of the Koran, chap. iii, p. 38 (F. Warne & CO).
(2) See G. Sale's Prelim. Discourse to his translation of the Koran.

The following are a variety of translated passages of the Koran bearing on the story of Jesus Christ, and the disputed nature and life of the Great Teacher of Christianity.

**1. - Promised to Mary**

*(a) "And when the angels said: O Mary, verily, God hath chosen thee and hath purified thee, and hath raised thee above all other women of the world: 0 Mary, be, therefore, devout towards thy Lord, and prostrate thyself and bow down in worship with those devotees who bow down to Him." (Koran: 3: 42-43)*

*(b) "And when angels said: O Mary, verily, God sendeth thee good tidings; thou shalt bear a word from Him, whose name will be Jesus, the son of Mary, and who will be illustrious in this world and in the next, and one of those men who are honored with approach to the presence of God; and he shall speak to alike when in the cradle and when he is grown up; and he shall be one of the most righteous: she said, How, O my Lord, shall I have a son, since a man hath not touched me? The angel said: Thus God will create what He will; when He decreeth a thing. He only saith 'Be' and 'it is'. He (God) shall teach him the scripture and wisdom and the law and the Gospel; and He shall appoint him an apostle to the children of Israel, and he shall say to them Verily, I come unto you with a sign from your Lord, for I will make before you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird; then I will breathe into it, and it shall become an animated bird, by the will of God; and I will heal the blind and the leper, by the will of God, and I will raise the dead by the will of God; and I will tell you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Verily, this will be a sign to you, if ye believe. And I will come to confirm the Law which was revealed me, and to allow unto you as lawful part of what hath been forbidden you; therefore, fear God and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord; therefore serve Him. This is the right way. But Jesus perceiving their unbelief, said: who of you will assist towards the way to God? The disciples said: we are your helpers towards the way to God: we do believe in God, and do thou bear witness, we are true believers. O Lord, we believe in what Thou hast sent*

*down, and have followed Thy apostle; write us down, then, with those who bear witness (of his) message."(Koran: 3: 45-53)*

**2. - Birth of Jesus**

*(a) "And make mention, in the scripture, of Mary; when she retired from her family eastward, and drew a veil upon her to conceal herself from them; and We sent our spirit (Gabriel) to her, and he appeared to her in the form of a perfect man. She said: 'I fly for refuge from thee to the Most Merciful. If thou fearest Him.' He said: 'I am the messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a purified son.' She said, 'How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me, and I was never unchaste? He said: 'So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said, it is a simple thing with Him, and that He Will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Him: This is a thing already decreed.' Wherefore she conceived him; and she retired aside with him (in her womb) to a distant place, and the throes came upon her near the trunk of a palm-tree. She said 'Would to God, I had died before this, and had become as one lost in oblivion.' And he who was below her (namely the newly born baby) came to her, saying, 'Be not grieved. Thy Lord hath provided for thee a rivulet at thy feet; and do thou shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards thee: it will drop fresh ripe dates to eat. Therefore, eat and drink and cheer thyself; and shouldst thou see any human being, say, Verily, I have vowed a fast to the Most Merciful; wherefore I will by no means speak to a human being this day.' So she came with the baby to her people. And they said to her 'O Mary, thou has committed a grave thing. O sister of Aaron[1], thy father was not a bad man, nor was thy mother unchaste.' And*

(1) Mr. G. Sale rightly comments on this phrase, "O sister of Aaron" as follows:

Several Christian writers think, the Koran stands convicted of a manifest falsehood in this particular, but I am afraid, the Mohammedans may avoid charge, as they do, by several answers. Some say, the virgin Mary had ready a brother named Aaron, who had the same father, but a different mother; other suppose Aaron, the brother of Moses, is there meant, but say, Mary is called his sister, either because she was of the Levitical race (as by her being related to Elizabeth, it should seem she was) or by way of comparison; others say, that it was a different person of that name who was contemporary with her, and conspicuous for his good or bad qualities, and that they likened her to him, either by may of condemnation or reproach. (See Sale's Translation of the Koran).

*she made a sign to him (the infant). They said: 'how shall we speak to him who is an infant in the cradle?' He said:*

*'Verily, I am servant of God: He hath given me the Book (the Gospel), and He hath appointed me a prophet. And He hath made me blessed, where ever I may be, and hath commanded me to pray to him and to give alms, as I live; and hath made me dutiful towards my mother; and He hath not made me cruel or wicked. The peace of God was on me the day I was born, and it will be on me the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised to life.'*

*This was Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth, concerning whom they dispute."(Koran: 19: 16-34)*

*(b) "Verily, the case of Jesus with God is the same as that of Adam. He created him (Adam) out of the dust, and then said to him 'Be', and he was. This is the truth from the Lord; be not, therefore, one of those who dispute."(Koran: 3: 59-60)*

**One of the Miracles of Jesus.**

*Remember when the disciples said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, is the Lord able to send down to us a table of provisions from heaven?" He said: "Fear God, if ye be true believers." They said: "We desire to eat therefrom, and to have our hearts assured, and to know that thou hast indeed spoken truth to us, and to be witness thereof." Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O God, our Lord, send down a table to us from heaven, that the day of its descent become a recurring festival to us, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee; and do Thou provide food for us, for Thou art the best provider." God said: "Verily, I will cause it to descend unto you; but whosoever among you shall disbelieve hereafter, I will surely punish him with more severe a punishment than I will punish any other of my creatures." (Koran: 5: 112-115)*

**The Mission of Jesus**

*(a) "We formerly sent our apostles with evident signs and*

*miracles, and We sent down with them the Scriptures and the balance, that men might observe justice."(Koran: 57: 25)*

*"And We caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to succeed them, and We gave him the Gospel: and We put in the hearts of those who followed him, compassion and mercy: but as to the monastic life, they invented it themselves: We did not prescribe it to them; they did it out of design to please God, yet this they did not properly observe. And We gave to such of them as believed, their reward, but many of them were evil doers."(Koran: 57: 27)*

*(b) "We also caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow the footsteps of the Prophets, to confirm the Law which was sent down before him; and We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming the preceding word and a direction and admonition unto those who fear God: so that they who have received the Gospel might judge, according to what God hath revealed them. And whoso will not judge according to what God hath revealed, they are certainly transgressors." (Koran: 5: 46-47)*

*(c) "Some of the apostles We have endowed more than others. Those, to whom God hath spoken, He hath raised to the loftiest position. And to Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave manifest signs, and We strengthened him with the Spirit. And if God had pleased, they who came after them, would not have wrangled, after the clear signs had reached them. But into disputes they fell: some of them believed, and some were infidels: yet, if God had pleased, they would not have wrangled: but God doth what He will."(Koran: 2: 253)*

*(d) "And Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O children of Israel. Verily, I am God's apostle to you who came to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle who shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad. But when he (Ahmad) presented himself with clear signs of his mission, they said; 'This is manifest sorcery' "(Koran: 61: 6) Jesus said to them: 'I come to attest the law which was revealed before me, and to allow you part of that which had been forbidden you; and I come to you with a sign*

*from your Lord, therefore, fear God and obey me; verily, God is my Lord and your Lord; therefore, worship Him: this is the right way."(Koran: 43: 63-64)*

**Jesus not Crucified.**

*(a) "The Jews were cursed for their unbelief and for their having spoken a grievous calumny against Mary and for their saying; 'Verily, we have slain Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God;' yet they slew him not, and crucified him not, but he was represented to them by one in his likeness, and verily, they who disputed about him, were in doubt, concerning this matter they had no sure knowledge thereof, but followed only an uncertain opinion*[1]*. They (the Jews) did not really kill him; but God took him up to Himself and God is Mighty and Wise."(Koran: 4: 156-157)*

**Jesus and the Divinity.**

*(a) "He (Jesus) is no other than a servant of God whom We favored, and forth as an instance (of divine power) to the children of Israel; and if We pleased, verily, We could have even produced angels from yourselves, to succeed you on earth."(Koran: 43: 59-60)*

*(b) "And when Jesus came with manifest signs, he said 'Now I am come to you with wisdom, and to explain to you part of those things, about which you disagree; therefore fear God, and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord; wherefore worship ye Him: this is the right path.' But the different parties fell into disputes among themselves*[2]*, but woe to those thus transgressed, because of the punishment of a grievous day."(Koran: 43: 63-65)*

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(1) For some maintained, that he was justly and really crucified; some insisted, that it was not Jesus who suffered, but another who resembled him In the face... others said, he was taken up to heaven, and others, that his manhood only suffered, and that his godhead ascended into heaven.

(2) Either referring to the Jews in the time of Jesus whom opposed his doctrine or to the Christians, who have fallen into various opinions concerning him: some making him to be God, others the Son of God, and others one of the persons of the trinity etc.

*(c) "The Jews say: 'Ezra is the son of God;' and the Christians say, 'Christ is the son of God.' This is their saying with their mouths, following the example of those who misbelieved before them. May God resist them! How are they infatuated! They take their priests and their monks for their Lord, besides God, and (take) Christ, the son of Mary, (for their Lord besides God) although they are commanded to worship one Deity only; There is no Deity but He (the true God); far be those Him whom they associate (with God)."(Koran: 30-31)*

**The Trinity condemned.**

*(a) "They are surely infidels who say, 'Verily, God is Christ the son of Mary;' since Christ said, 'O ye children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord; whoever, shall associate aught with Him, God shall forbid him paradise, and his habitation shall be hell free; and the ungodly shall have none to help them.' They are certainly infidels who say, 'God is the third of three,' for there is no Deity, but God alone. And if they do not desist from what they say, a painful torment shall surely be inflicted upon those who misbelieved among them. Will they not turn unto God, and ask His pardon? Since God is Gracious and Merciful. Christ, the son of Mary, is no more than an apostle. Other apostles preceded him, and his mother was a true believer; they both used to eat food (as all other human beings do). Behold, how we declare unto them the signs (of God's unity); and then behold, how they turn aside (from the right path). Say, (O Mohammad) unto them, will ye worship, besides God, that which can cause you neither harm nor profit? God heareth (everything) and seeth (everything) Say, O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just bounds in your religion, by speaking beside the truth, neither follow the desires of people who have heretofore erred, and who have seduced many, and have gone astray from the right path."(Koran: 5: 72-77)*

*(b) "O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just bounds in your religion, neither say of God otherwise than the truth. Verily, Christ, the son of Mary, was the apostle, of God*

*and His Word which He conveyed to Mary, and a Spirit coming from Him. Believe, therefore, in God and His apostles, and say not: 'There are three (Deities)' desist; it will be better for you. God is the only Deity. Far be it from Him, that He should have a son; unto Him belongeth whatever is in heaven and on earth; and God is the best Protector. Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant to God."(Koran: 4: 171-172)*

*(c) "It beseemeth not a man, that God should give the Scripture and the wisdom and the gift of prophecy to him, and that then he should say to the people 'Be ye worshippers of me, as well as of God,' but rather, 'Be ye perfect in things pertaining to God, since ye know the Scriptures, and have studied deeply."(Koran: 3: 79)*

*(d) "And when God shall say (namely unto Jesus on the Day of Judgment) O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said unto the people, 'Take me and my mother for two deities, beside God?" He shall answer 'Glory be to Thee, it is not for me, to say that which I ought not in truth; if I had said it, Thou wouldst surely have known it: Thou knowest what is in me, but I know not what is in Thee; for Thou art the knower of all secrets. I have not spoken to them otherwise, than Thou didst command me. I said to them:*

*Worship God, my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness against them as long as I stayed amongst them ; but when Thou causest me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them, as Thou art the Watcher over all things. If Thou punish them, they are surely Thy servants, and if Thou forgive them, Thou art the Almighty and the All-wise."(Koran: 5: 116-118)*

## CONTRADICTORY TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY FROM MUSLIMS' POINT OF VIEW

The following would illustrate certain contradictions in the fundamental principles of Christianity, as viewed by Muslims:

The first and the foremost Christian principle is Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. This, in itself, is but a clear illustration of the principle of compromise, of which a divine religion should be free. The Romans believed in three gods, whilst the Jews believed in one. When the Romans showed their readiness to adopt Christianity, a compromise was, it seems, at once arrived at. Apparently for the sake of the Romans, the Unity of God, as believed by the Jews, underwent a change; it was assimilated to the tri-headed Godhood, and so the two creeds 'became merged into one.' No Muslim person can think of reconciling such contradictions.

The second instance of contradictory principles is, that Jesus has been called a man and God, at the same time; while the fact is that the Creator and the created cannot be one and the same. Therefore, Jesus cannot be God and man, at the same time.

The third principle, where contradictions have been brought together, is that, on the one hand, Jesus declares in the Gospels, that violation of even the least commandment of the law dooms a man to eternal perdition, while it is taught by Paul, that the Law was a curse.

The fourth example of contradictory principles, is the Christian doctrine, that God cannot forgive sins, hence the necessity of the crucifixion of His only begotten son for the sins of mankind, while maintaining, at the same time, that God would forgive us our trespasses, only when we forgive those that trespass against us. A Muslim cannot understand how God both can and cannot forgive trespasses. If He cannot forgive, then vain is our forgiving or condemning; for that is of no avail. If He can, then a Muslim does not see that there is any need of Atonement.

The fifth contradictory principle is the teaching that Jesus has taken away all our sins by suffering crucifixion for mankind at large, impressing upon us, at the same time, the necessity of doing good. If Jesus by his unnatural death has atoned for our sins, then there should be no need for us to trouble ourselves about good or bad deeds any more. It matters little whether we do good or evil. We are quite at liberty, to revel and carouse at will. On the one hand, Christianity teaches us the doctrine of Atonement, thus making us independent of all goods, while on the other hand, it imposes upon us the obligation to perform good deeds.

The sixth contradictory principle that Christianity offers to the world is that it holds Christ as accursed, dying (as he is believed by Christians) an accursed death on the cross; yet it holds him up as the very paragon of excellence, the son of God, His dearest one. It is impossible for a Muslim, to comprehend how an accursed man can be the son of God. Curse betokens divine vengeance, a great gulf between Him and the person accursed. To reconcile these two contradictions passes the wit of a Muslim.

The seventh contradiction is that Jesus is called the son of God, as well as the son of David. How can a man possibly, be the son of two distinct personalities? He must be either of one or of the other, but not of both at the same time.

## THE GODHEAD OF JESUS CONDEMNED BY ISLAM

The above has been the doctrine of the Mohammadan Religion with regard to the personality of Jesus Christ. After thirteen centuries the same doctrine is now adopted by some Christian Churches, namely, the Unitarian. Probably it will not be out of place to quote here a few statements from a lecture, delivered before the Cooper Literary Institute, Philadelphia, on March 4th 1913, by Er. A. Gen. Naker, late President of the Institute:

"We have now arrived at a time when the literature of all nations, and their history, are being carefully studied by those who are fitted for the task. The many frauds which the Christian Churches have practiced in the past are all being exposed now, and the result is that many of the wisest and best men have forsaken the orthodox doctrines of the Christian churches. We have here in the United States, a large and intelligent body of believers who are called Unitarians, i.e. believers in one God, and who object to the old doctrine of a trinity of person in the Godhead, and reject the same. They look upon Christ as a great prophet and a good man, but still only a man, our ex-President Taft belongs to this Unitarian church. In taking his farewell from the Unitarian congregation in Washington, he said in his last speech to them:

'It has always been a wonder to me, why all the world is not Unitarian.'

The President, of course, meant by 'all the world', all the Protestant world of the United States, because the Catholic church is under the power of the Pope, and admits of no change of creed or dogma."

The Unitarians consider Christ as a mere man, inspired as other great men are, though in a greater degree. They reject the doctrine of original sin, the belief in miracles, and generally the whole supernatural elements of Christianity. There are many of the so-called liberals in the churches who hold Unitarian doctrine, but do not separate from their old connections. President Taft is therefore entirely justified in asserting that the trouble we suffer from - if it be trouble - is that there are so many Unitarians in other churches who do not sit in the pews of our church. But that means ultimately that they are coming to us. There seems to be every prospect that President Taft's prophecy may be fulfilled in regard to the Protestant world.

"Charles Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University, made a similar prophecy in a pamphlet called 'The religion of the Future' Printed by the American Unitarian Association. Mr. Eliot says: 'The religion of the future will not be based on authority, either spiritual or temporal,' (namely on neither Pope nor King). 'It is hardly necessary to say that in the future religion, there will be no personification of the forces of nature. There will be in the religion of the future, no identification of any human being, however majestic in character, with the Eternal Deity.'

"The ordinary consolations of constitutional Christianity no longer satisfy intelligent people whose lives are broken by the sickness or premature death of those they love..."

The lecturer quoted above goes on to say: "Jesus Christ prayed (John XVII, 3) 'And this is life eternal, that might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent' (namely, Thine apostle). There are many other places to prove that Christ did not claim to be God. But Christians cannot see it in that light, because they want three Gods instead of one...'

"Of course, there are points, at which all religions touch each other but the Christian fails to see this. The Muslim believes in one God and also in Christ as one of God's great prophets. The Christian says, he also

believes in one God, but He has a trinity of persons. This is evidently derived from the Hindu religion, from Bram, Vishnu and Siva. The Jewish religion knew of no trinity in the Old Testament, and yet the Christian pretends, that his religion is founded on the Jewish religion. The Jewish religion knew of no Savior, besides the one God. He was their Savior and Redeemer. See Isaiah, 43: 3, 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior' and Isaiah 42: 8, 'I am the Lord that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,' and again (Isaiah 43: 11). 'I, even I am the Lord, and beside me there is no Savior,' and (Isaiah 44: 6). 'Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts. I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.' There are many other passages in Isaiah, and other Old Testament books which insist that there is no God, but the one God, and He is the Savior and Redeemer, and there is none beside Him. The Christians who take Christ their Savior and Redeemer are, therefore, outside of the promise of the Scriptures which they themselves acknowledge to be the word of God. But all this with the many passages in the New Testament, where Christ distinctly says that he is not God, does not convince them."

## WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF IN RELATION TO HIS ALLEGED DIVINITY

According to the Koran[1], Jesus, on the day of Judgment will be asked by God, whether he told his people to consider him and his mother[2] as two Gods, besides God Himself. Whereupon, Jesus not only

(1) Koran: Chap. 6: 113-118.

(2) From the Koranic description of Mary being taken for a God by the Christians, some Christian critics of the Koran conclude that the doctrine of the Trinity, according so the Koran, consists of three persons: God, Jesus and Mary, but this is an unwarranted conclusion. Mary is spoken of as being taken for an object of worship by the Christians; but the doctrine of the Trinity is not mentioned here; the Divinity of Mary is not mentioned where the Trinity is spoken of. Had Mary not been worshipped by the Christians as the 'Mother of God', the conclusion would have been safe, that the Koran mistook Mary for the third person of the Trinity. But the doctrine and practice of Mariolatry, as it is called by Protestant controversialists, is too well known. In the catechism of the Roman Church, the following doctrines are to be found: 'That she is truly the mother of God, and the second Eve, by whose means we have received blessing and life; that she is the mother of Pity and, very specially our advocate;=

disavows his claim of divinity, but also asserts he never preached such a doctrine to his disciples, when he was with them. Fortunately the narrative of the Teacher of Nazareth as reported in the four gospels, though in the consideration of Islamic judgment not genuine in its entirety, still contains sufficient evidence to corroborate the statement of the Koran. The following are the sayings of Christ about himself as reported by the Evangelists:

"*I do nothing of myself.*" (John vii. 28).

"*My Father is greater than I.*" (John xiv. 2).

"*This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*" (John xvii. 31).

"*The Lord our God is one Lord.*" (Mark xvii: 29).

"*Thou shalt worship thy Lord the God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*" (Matt. iv. 10).

"*Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, that is God.*"

"*I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*"

"*I by the finger of God cast out devils.*" (Luke XI. 20).

"*Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.*" (John XI. 41, 42)

"*The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the*

=that her images are of the utmost utility. (Encyc. Brit. 11th ed. vol. 17. 813) It is also stated that her intercessions are directly appealed to in the Litany. And further that there were certain women in Thrace, Scythia and Arabia, who were in the habit of worshipping the Virgin as a goddess, the offer of a cake being one of the features of their worship.

*same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*" (John V.36).

"*If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world.*" (John XII. 47).

Jesus then went a little further, fell on his face, and prayed, saying:

"*O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"(Matt. XXVI: 38, 39).

"*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani - My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me.*" (Matt. XXVII. 46).

"*Father, into my hands I commend my spirit.*" (Luke. XXIII. 46).

These expressions confirm to a great extent the Islamic notion of the Holy Jesus Christ, namely, that he was a true servant and a messenger of God, and one of His humble creatures, and never a god. Jesus admits his limited knowledge and power. He looks to God even for his daily submission to the divine will. He disavows all goodness for himself, when speaking of God. A messenger, no doubt, he was of God. He spoke to the children of Israel what he heard from God. He has been reported to perform certain miracles; but these he performed by the help of God. He is said to have raised Lazarus to life, but he has to pray to God, and thank Him on being heard. When he was asked, he admitted that such miracles could be done only through fasting and prayer to God.

Speaking of himself, Jesus also is reported to have said:

"*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*"

In another instance he is reported to have said:

"*Of myself I can do nothing; of that day and that hour knoweth no man... neither the son.*"

Muslims fail to understand, how, in the presence of these admissions on the part of Jesus, divinity can still be attributed to him. This is a problem which can only, be solved by the words said of Jesus:

*"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast kept these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babies."*

## PRIESTCRAFT AND ISLAM

Islam is the Faith of works, of approach to God through self endeavor, and not through any intermediary. In Islam there is no such teaching as that of *'The Holy Spirit descending in the greatest degree to the elected Pope, and in lesser degrees to bishops, deans and clergy.* That every soul must labor for its own salvation, is the keystone of Islamic teaching. Islam has no apostolic succession, no body of men whose very livelihood depends upon their claim that, after their ordination as priests, they have the Spirit of God in them, and that, as Jesus was the chief intercessor between God and man, so the priest is intercessor between the people and Jesus and the saints. While other religions believe, that man cannot approach God, and cannot even confess his sins to Him, but that he must confess to a priest, who, having the *"Spirit of God, has the power to assure him that he is forgiven."* Islam teaches that *"He who is best among men is he who does most good works."* In such a religion the priest is not needed. Truly, mosques require attendants, and some men love to devote their lives to religion; but the doctrine of priesthood itself is not, and never has been found, in the religion of Islam. With Islam, a man may attain to spiritual closeness to God, not through his having been ordained a priest, but by living a life of religion, piety and good works.

The simple worship of the One True God Who rules over all, Who hears the prayers, both of the most cultured and the most ignorant, requiring nothing but a pure heart and sincere motive, is the chief characteristic of the religion of Islam. The absence of the priest in the religion of Islam is one of the reasons which helped Muslims to be better acquainted with their religion.

# SUPPOSED DIVINITY OF JESUS

Modern Christian Divines agree with Islamic views, as to the supposed Divinity of Jesus.

The following extract is taken from 'The Graphic' of August 20th, 1920:

"During the last few days orthodox Christianity has received the greatest blow it has suffered for many years. Outside the Church, scores of people, learned and skilled in the ways of theology, have been attempting to prove that the basis of Christianity was all wrong, and that modern science had destroyed its very foundation. This time though, a blow has come from the inside itself; and three highly-placed theologians, all avowed members of the Church of England, in which they live, preach and have their being, have united, to use words which lay men take to mean, that Christ was not the son of God, but a Palestine Jew..."

"Now, what Renan argued in 'The Life of Jesus', what all scientists outside the faith have expressed in learned terms, has been suddenly put into a bomb which, thrown at the Modern Churchmen's Congress at Cambridge not a week ago, has staggered the Anglican Church so much, that the reverberations of the shock will be felt for years... Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Bethune-Baker, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, the Rev. R.G. Parsons of Rusholme, have stood up at an Anglican Conference, and - if their words have been reported rightly - denied the Godhead..."

'Christ was not divine but human', said Dr. Rashdall. 'I do not for a moment suppose, that Christ ever thought of himself as God,' said Dr. Bethune-Baker. 'Jesus was a man, genuinely utterly, completely, unreservedly human,' said the Rev. R. G. Parsons - 'A Palestine Jew who expressed himself through the conditions and limitations of life, and though peculiar to his own time.'

These three men are not people whose opinions can be disregarded, even by the most orthodox of all Christians. They are men of the highest intellectual attainments, men of brilliant achievements in the world of theology; all of them men who, as lecturers and fellows and professors,

have instructed scores of Anglican divine before their ordination and since."

## CANON BARNES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

In its issue of January 6th, 1922, the Daily Graphic has dealt with a speech delivered by the Canon of Westminster at the Association of University Women Teachers. The following is an extract of the speech as inserted in the above issue:

"...In this connection it was most important, that the true nature and value of the Old Testament should be explained to children. It was Jewish literature; and was valuable for us, mainly, because it showed how the Jewish prophets were led to the idea of God, which Jesus accepted and emphasized, and because in it, vague expectations of a Messiah, foreshadowed the advent of Christ. But in the Old Testament were also to be found folk-lore history, half-savage morality, and obsolete forms of worship based upon primitive and erroneous ideas of the nature of God, and crude science. The whole, however, was valuable, as showing the growth of a pure monotheism among the Jews - a religious phenomenon, as remarkable and inexplicable as the great intellectual development of the Golden Age of Greece. It was very difficult to convey truths, like this, to children, and so it seemed to him (to Canon Barnes), better, to postpone the Old Testament part of religious teaching, to the later stages; otherwise, children would learn stories, like that, with which the Book of Genesis opened, which they would afterwards discover to be untrue"

The same paper goes on to say:

"He (Canon Barnes) had come reluctantly to the conclusion, that it was highly dangerous, to use for didactic purposes allegories, as the creation of woman, the Daniel stories and Jonah; it encouraged the prevalent belief, that religious people had a low standard of truth."

Thus, the Reverenced Doctor condemns the Old Testament, and desires to eliminate it from the course of studies. He considers that,

among other stories that of Jonah is dangerous to teach to human intellect while in its infancy and growth. He acknowledges that to accept stories, like that of Jonah and Daniel, as genuine pieces of history, would betray a low standard of truth in the believers of Christianity.

## WAS CHRIST DIVINE?

Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, recently delivered a remarkable speech at the Modern Churchman's Congress on 'Jesus as the Son of God', and in the course of his address, he said:

"There is a growing demand that liberal theologians should speak in quite definite language about the divinity of Christ. The following are some of the things that we do not and cannot mean, by ascribing divinity to Christ:

1. - Jesus did not claim divinity for himself.

He may have allowed himself to be called Messiah, but never in any critically well attested sayings, is there anything which suggests, that his conscious relation to God is other than that of a man towards God. The speeches of the fourth Gospel, where they go beyond the synoptic conception, cannot be regarded as history.

2. - It follows from this admission that Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, and that he had not merely a human body, but also a human soul, intellect and will.

3. - It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine, unless we say that all human souls existed before their birth into the world, but that is not usually accepted catholic position.

4. - The divinity of Christ does not necessarily imply virgin birth, or any other miracle. The virgin birth, if it could be historically proved would be no demonstration of Christ's divinity, nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt on that doctrine.

5. - The divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. There is no

more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, or that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny, that he entertained some expectation about the future which history has not verified."

The Rev. H.E.A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, who opened the discussion, was as outspoken as the Dean.

"It should be clearly realized," said the Rev. Major, "that Jesus did not claim in the Gospels to be the Son of God in a physical sense, such as the narratives of the virgin birth suggest, nor did he claim to be the Son of God in a metaphysical sense, such as was required by the Nicene theology. He claimed to be God's son in a moral sense, in the sense, in which all human beings are sons of God, as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God."

Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, who is recognized as one of the most fearless and outspoken of Modem Churchmen, had a distinguished university career. He was a theological tutor at Balliol, and preacher at Lincoln's Inn, for five years. He was Dean of Hereford, before his transfer to Carlisle, in 1917[(1)].

The glory of Jesus naturally does not lie in being a God, because he cannot be a God, but his whole triumph lies in being a man, a perfect man, a holy man, and in the words of the Holy Koran, a Model for the people to whom he was sent.

## BIBLICAL PROPHECIES AS REFER1NG TO THE ADVENT OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD

Although Muslims hold, that the original Old and New Testaments have largely been corrupted by the interference of prejudiced men, or otherwise, as has already been pointed out elsewhere in this book, they

(1) The Islamic Review August 1921.

still believe, that the existing Scriptures contain, to such an extent as they are confirmed and supported by the Holy Koran, the True Word of God.

The following are therefore, a few extracts of the safe contents of the Bible which Mohammadans take to refer directly to the Holy Prophet Mohammad:

> *'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Paran and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand went a fiery law for them."*
>
> (Deut. XXXIII.2).

> *"God came from Teman, and the Holy one from Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise."* (Hab III. 3).

> *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."* (Deut. XVII. 18).

> *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. How be it when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."* (John XVI. 12...13).

While Moses promises to the children of Israel the coming Epiphany of God in the person of a "Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee", Jesus characterizes the promised one as the Spirit of truth, who will guide them into all truth. The descriptions of the Holy one in the words of' Moses and Jesus however, are strikingly similar:

> *"I will put words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."* (Deut. xviii. 18).

> *"He shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."* (John xvi. 13).

These words make the promised one a messenger from God, and a Prophet rather than one abstract and impersonal Divine Epiphany, and if

"The Lord came from Sinai" in His revelation to Moses, and "He rose up from Seir" according to His message from the Nazarene, should we not look for some other son of man "from Paran", to stand for the shining forth of God from the same? Especially when the Prophet Habakuk calls him:

> *"The Holy One from Paran."* (Hab. iii. 3).

The Prophet spoken of by Moses, has however, wrongly been confused with Jesus, in later Christian theology. The house of Jacob always distinguished Christ from the Prophet spoken of in Deut. xviii. 18, as it appears from the following we read about John the Baptist. "What then, art thou Elias?" "Art thou that Prophet?" And He answered, "No..." And they asked him,

> *"Why baptized thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?"* (John i. 21.. .22).

These words speak distinctly of three different personalities, namely Christ, Elias and 'that Prophet'. Jesus himself did not claim to be "that Prophet". If Jesus was the Christ and John the Baptist Elias, as Jesus himself makes him to be, we are quite justified in concluding that the appearance of Jesus was the promised Prophet. Even the first followers of Jesus were of the same opinion.

> *"And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."* (Acts. iii. 20...22).

Though the writer of these words looks to the second advent of Jesus for the fulfillment of the Mosaic prophecies, so far it is undisputed that the first advent of Jesus is not the advent of the "Prophet like unto me". The second advent of Christ as well cannot be the fulfillment of the words in Deuteronomy. Jesus, as it is believed by the Church has to appear for the judgment and not for giving the law, while the Prophet like unto Moses, has to come with a fiery law in his right hand. Like Moses,

he will bring the law; besides, the Promised Prophet was to be raised not from amongst the Israelites, but from amongst the brethren of the Israelites, namely the Ishmaelites.

In ascertaining the personality of the promised Prophet, the other prophecy of Moses is, however, helpful, in which he speaks of the shining forth of God from Paran. In Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, the Lord has been compared with the sun. He comes from Sinai, he rises from Seir, but he shines in his full glory from Paran, where he had to appear with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. None of the Israelites, including Jesus, had anything to do with Paran. Hager, with her son Ishmael, wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, who afterwards dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. (Gen. xxi. 21). He married an Egyptian woman, and through his first born, Kedar, gave descent to the Arabs who, from that time till now, are the dwellers of the wilderness of Paran. Admittedly on all hands, the descent of the Holy Mohammad, is traced to Ishmael through Kedar, he appeared as a Prophet in the wilderness of Paran, and re-entered Mecca with ten thousand saints, and gave a fiery law to the people, so that the prophecy has been fulfilled to its very letter. The words of the prophecy in Habakkuk are especially noteworthy. His - the Holy One from Paran - glory covered the heaven and the earth with full praise. The word 'praise' is very significant: the very name 'Mohammad', as already stated elsewhere in this book, means 'the highly praised'. Again the inhabitants of the wilderness of Paran had been promised a Revelation;

> *"Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: He shall cry, yea, roar, He shall prevail against His enemies."* (Isa. xiii. 11. 12. 13).[1].

Moreover we read in Isaiah two other prophecies worthy of note where references have been made to Kedar.

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(1) Reference to the Life of the Prophet in part 11 of this Book shows how distinctly this prophecy has been fulfilled.

*"Arise, shine, for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee... The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midan and Ephak; all they from Sheba shall come... All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaiath shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on Mine Altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory."* (Isaiah ix. 1-7).

The other prophecy runs thus:

*"The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge O ye traveling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty; they prevented with their bread Him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail."*
(Isaiah xxi. 13-16).

The above two revelations read in the light of the one in Deuteronomy, will make the meaning quite clear: It is acknowledged, that Ishmael inhabited the wilderness of Paran, where he gave birth to Kedar, who is the ancestor of the Arabs. The sons of Kedar had to receive revelation from God. The flocks of Kedar had to come up with acceptance to a divine altar, to glorify "the house of my glory", where the darkness had to cover the earth for centuries, and then that very land had to receive light from God. All the glory of Kedar had to fail, and the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, had to diminish within a year after they fled from the swords and from the bent bows. Therefore, the Holy one from Paran (Hab. iii. 3) should be no one else than the Prophet Mohammad. He is the holy offspring of Ishmael through Kedar, who settled in the wilderness of Paran(1). The Prophet Mohammad is the only Prophet, through whom the Arabs received revelation at the time when the darkness had covered the earth and gross darkness the people(2). Through him God shone from Paran, and Mecca is the only place, The Prophet Mohammad was persecuted by his people and had to leave

(1) See The History of the Arabs in this book or anywhere else.
(2) George Sale: Prelim. Discourse.

Mecca. He was thirsty and fled from the drawn swords and the bent bows; within a year after his flight, the descendants of Kedar met him at Badr, the field of the first battle between the Meccans and the Prophet[1]. There the children of Kedar and their number of archers diminished, and all the glory of Kedar failed. Besides, the house of 'my glory', referred to in Isaiah ix is the house of God at Mecca, and not the Church of Christ, as thought by Christian theologians. The flocks of Kedar, as mentioned in verse 7, have never come to the Church of Christ. It is a fact, that the villages of Kedar, and their inhabitants are the only people in the whole world who have remained impenetrable to any influence of the Church of Christ[2]. Again, the mention of ten thousand saints, in Deuteronomy xxxiii, is very significant... "he shined forth from Paran and he came with ten thousand of saints." The whole history of the wilderness of Paran shows that there was no other event, but when Mecca was conquered by the Prophet. He came with ten thousand followers from Medina and reentered the "house of my glory". He gave a fiery law to the world which has superseded and cancelled all other laws. The comforter - the Spirit of Truth - spoken of by Jesus was no other than the Prophet Mohammad himself. It cannot be taken to be the Holy Ghost, as the Church theology says "It is expedient for you that I go away," says Jesus, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The way, in which Jesus describes the Comforter, makes him to be a human being, and not a ghost. "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak."

The words of Jesus clearly refer to some messenger from God. He calls him the Spirit of Truth, and so the Koran speaks of the Prophet Mohammad. "Nay he has come with the Truth and verified the apostles."

The above prophecy of Jesus has also been reported in the Koran in the following words:

> *"Jesus, the son of Mary, said O children of Israel, surely I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah, and giving the good news of an apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad."*

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(1) See Sir William Muir's 'The Life of Mohammad.

(2) See George Sale's Prelim. Discourse.

The word 'Ahmad' which is another name of the Prophet Mohammad, is derived from the same root, namely 'Hamd' which signifies praising, and it means a person whose personal qualities are such as to be worthy of praise. It should not be supposed, that Jesus uttered the very words which are reported in the Holy Koran, for he spoke in Hebrew, and not in Arabic. The actual words of Jesus not being preserved, we should depend on a Greek version, in which we find the word Periclete, which is translated in English as comforter. It is a well known fact, that translations are sometimes misleading, and therefore the use of the word Periclete in the Greek version, or that of comforter in the English, does not positively show, what the textual word spoken by Jesus was. Anyhow the qualifications which are reported in John xvi. 16 and xvi. 7, are met with in the person of the Holy Prophet Mohammad. He is stated to be one who shall abide for ever, and it is the Prophet's law, for after him comes no prophet, to promulgate a new law. He is to teach all things, and it was with a perfect law, that the Holy Prophet came. The prophecy in John xvi. 12 - 14, about the Spirit of Truth(1) which is the same as the comforter, mentioned in John xiv. 17, clearly establishes the following points:

(1). Jesus could not guide into all truth because his teaching was confined to reform the Israelites and he denounced only their crying evils: but the teaching of the Comforter would be a perfect law, guiding men to all truth; and the Holy Koran is the only book which claims to be a perfect Book of Divine Laws.

(2). That the Comforter would not speak a word of himself, but that which he shall hear, he shall speak; a qualification which is met with only in the person of the Prophet Mohammad.

(3). That he will glorify Jesus, and the Holy Prophet did glorify Jesus by denouncing as utterly false all calumnies which the Israelites indulgingly attributed to Jesus and his mother.

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(1) It is to be noted, that the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is frequently called "the Truth" In the Holy Koran, as In xvii: 81: "And say, The Truth has come, and the falsehood has vanished".

## *5. The Belief In The Day Of Resurrection.*

The fifth pillar of the Mohammedan creed is belief in the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning of Judgment, which day shall be the beginning of an eternal life after death. The dead shall be restored to life. Every human being shall have to render an account of his or her actions on earth. The happiness or misery of individuals will depend upon the manner, in which they have performed the commandments of God.

The Arabian Prophet, being the seal of God's Messengers to mankind, has given several prophecies in detail, with respect to the state of being from the time a man is dead, until the resurrection, and also an account of the eternal destiny of mankind, beginning from that day. Faith in all such prophecies is essential to complete the creed of a perfect Muslim. Before entering into the main subject under discussion, it is desirable to make a few preliminary remarks.

Some people are apt to think that prophecies relating to matters connected with the after-life must be examined by pure reason before they can he adopted. There, however, should be no excuse for rejecting any prophecy on the mere assumption that it is difficult for human reason to comprehend it. Human power or discernment, penetration or discrimination on all questions raised by prophets must be restricted merely to deciding whether the information obtained through such an agency is or is not an impossibility. By impossibility is meant those things which human beings cannot be expected to believe, such as a camel passing through a needle's eye. But once it is no longer a question of impossibility, and the prophetic commission is rightly established there should be no excuse for human reason to reject any prophetic statement.

The Mohammedan School avails itself of the following suggestions with regard to the nature of prophecy and the obligation of mankind thereto.

The mind of a newly born infant is so undeveloped, that he has no knowledge of the wondrous world around him. As he grows up he gradually acquires knowledge of things through the various channels of comprehension. The first sense created in him is that of feeling by which

he can comprehend certain species of things such as heat and coldness, dampness and dryness, softness and coarseness etc. But colors or sounds do not come in the domain of the sense of feeling. Sight is the next to come into operation by which one can comprehend colors and forms and it is the most comprehensive of all the senses. Then hearing is open by which one can distinguish different voices. The child then acquires the power of discriminating different tastes. When a human being approaches his or her seventh year his or her intellect is further awakened. Through this new agency one acquires knowledge of things, beyond those dependent exclusively on the senses, and of which nothing exists in the world of sense.

The child then developed into a still higher state of being, namely the state of reasoning by which necessities, possibilities, impossibilities and other things which the senses cannot reach by themselves, are comprehended beyond reason, there is still another independent faculty, by which a new agency is given, to see the unseen and things of the future, and other things, from which reason is absolutely a different thing, inasmuch as understanding is different from those things belonging to reason, and as the power of reasoning is from things known only through the senses. A man born blind may well ignore the existence of anything like colors, and a man born deaf may ignore things like voices, merely on account of the lack of the particular senses capable of comprehending them. Inasmuch as it is unreasonable for a man born blind, to deny the existence of colors, or for a man born deaf, to deny the existence of voices, so too it is illogical for a man to deny the prophetic gift, simply because he himself is lacking in spiritual gifts. God has made it easy for his creatures to have some idea of the prophetic nature, by giving them a picture or type thereof, namely, sleep. When asleep, a man sometimes foresees things, either directly or symbolically. In the former, the meaning is clear; in the latter, it may be found by interpretation. This is a wonderful state of comprehension which, if not personally experienced by any particular person, but told to this person by another man, who, falling asleep, like the dead, could comprehend unseen things, would certainly be rejected by this person who would set forth proofs against the possibility of the information. It would be asserted that, as his sensitive faculties are the only source of comprehension and that even in their presence, a man cannot acquire any knowledge of unseen things, he

would all the more and most assuredly be incapable of knowing such things. This is reasoning by analogy which is, however, contradicted by actuality and practice. Even as reason is a state of human being by which an insight is created in man, enabling him to know species of reasonable things, the comprehension of which lie beyond the power of the senses, so prophecy is another state of being by which a still further source of knowledge is created, a peculiar light, capable of making visible unseen things, incomprehensible by reason.

The doubt in prophecy may be connected either with its possibility, its existence and occurrence, or with its occurrence to a certain person. The proof of its possibility is its existence. And the proof of its existence is the existence of branches of knowledge in the world that cannot be acquired by more reason as for instance, the science of medicine or astrology. Deep study of these sciences is sufficient to tell us of the impossibility of their being acquired, except by divine inspiration and guidance from God, and never by mere experience and practice. There are certain astronomic phenomena which do not take place but once every thousand years; but these have been accurately foretold. How then can such be got by practice? The same argument applies to medicine. Hence it is clear, that there is some supernatural power, by which we acquire the knowledge of things, which cannot be comprehended by mere reason. In this way prophecy can be illustrated. But prophecy does not consist only in these things. The comprehension of certain things, beyond the limits of reason, is but one of the various faculties of prophecy, and represents but a drop in the ocean of the prophetic nature. All men have in themselves a natural example of the prophetic faculty, namely what they foresee of future events while asleep. The two sciences of medicine and astronomy are also examples of the prophetic faculty. Prophecies are the miracles of prophets, which ordinary men can by no means attain by human reason. The nature of prophecy cannot be comprehended, except through a course of Sufism, that is, Mohammedan mysticism. By taking a course of Sufism, a man in the early stages of the course, acquires a clear notion of the nature of prophecy. This prepares his mind for a better appreciation of this wonderful subject.

If one doubts a particular person being a prophet, one cannot be convinced that he is so, except by knowing his character, either by

personal observation or by hearing of it repeatedly. If a man has knowledge of medicine he can easily distinguish between physicians and their statements. A man cannot fail to know that Galen was a physician or that Shakespeare was a Poet - knowledge based on experience and not on hearsay - if he is acquainted with medicine or poetry. By reading their books and words he can then have a full knowledge of the subjects they treat. The same thing applies to prophecy. If a man carefully goes through the Koran, and closely studies the saying of the Arabian Prophet, he will surely acquire a true knowledge of his character, and will necessarily admit that he must have enjoyed the highest degree of prophecy. The above knowledge may still be confirmed, by testing what the Prophet said concerning the magical effect of carrying out the practical religious obligations of cleansing and purifying the heart. He will thereby know, how true the Prophet was, when he said:

*"To him who shall put into practice what he has been taught, God shall give knowledge of what he did not know;"*

and how truly he said:

*"Him who, when getting up, forgets all his cares, except the care of God's duties, God shall relieve from the cares of this life and the next."*

If a man has tasted the truth of the above promises, and of thousands and thousands of others, he will surely have a perfect knowledge of the character of the prophet who foretold them. This is the way to attain conviction of the reality of prophecy, and not by seeking to see a rod turned into a serpent, or the moon divided into parts: because, by confining his researches to such wonderful acts alone, without their being corroborated by numerous other evidences, a man might mistake mere acts of sorcery and imposture for prophetic miracles.

Now it is time, to resume the statements of what a Muslim should believe will take place after death, according to the teachings of Islam. The Prophet of Islam prophecies that, when a man is put into the grave, he shall encounter two angels, that he will be greatly frightened. They shall cause the dead man, by divine power to sit upright, and examine him concerning his faith in the unity of God and the mission of the

Prophet Mohammad. These angels are called the 'tempters of the grave', as they appear to require the man examined, to give a wrong reply. If he answers rightly, he will rest in peace, until the resurrection. If not, he will remain suffering till that day. It is also to be believed, that some of the dead who were sinners but did not repent during their life, are liable, in their sepulcher, to some torment. Only the righteous and the repentant are saved from the torment of the grave. Some people would object to the above prophecy, that the answers of the dead, under such examination, have never been heard; or ask, how those can undergo it, whose bodies are burnt or devoured by beasts or birds, or otherwise consumed without burial. The answer is that it is possible notwithstanding, since men are not able to perceive what takes place in the next world unless they have been told of it by prophecy; and God, the all-Powerful who created man from dust, and dust from nothing is able to restore life to the dead so that he may understand any question put to him.

As to the resurrection, Muslims believe, that both body and soul will be raised. The time of resurrection is a profound secret to all, but God alone. However, the Prophet has foretold some signs of its approach. These signs are:

1- The decay of faith among men;

2- The advancing of the meanest persons to positions of dignity;

3- That towards the end of the world, men shall be much given to sensuality;

4- Tumults and seditions;

5- Great distress in the world, so that a man, when he passes by another's grave, shall say; "Would to God, I were in his place";

6- The appearance of an extraordinary beast which shall be able by God's power, to speak to men. This sign of the approach of the resurrection is mentioned in the 87th chapter of the Koran;

7- The buildings of Yathrib (Medina) shall reach Mecca etc.

**These are the lesser signs, the greater signs being:**

1- The sun's rising in the west;

2- The advent of Antichrist or the false Christ by whom people shall be tempted. He will do many apparent wonders and perform false miracles, sufficient to make people mistake him for the true Christ and, consequently they shall perish through their mistake;

3- The descent of Jesus on earth. He shall kill Antichrist, will come to Jerusalem and there, greatly distress Jesus and his companions, till at the request of Jesus, God will destroy them;

4- The advent of Al Mahdi. The Prophet said: "The world should not have an end, till one of his family should govern the Arabians, whose name should be the same as his own name and whose father's name, should be also the same as his own father's name; and who should fill the world with righteousness";

These are some of the greater signs which, according to the prophecies of the Apostle of God, are to precede the Day of Resurrection; but the exact time of it is perfect secret to all, but God. The immediate sign of the coming of the Resurrection will be the first blast of a trumpet which will be sounded three times:

(1) the blast of consternation;
(2) that of examination;
(3) the blast of Resurrection.

At the first blast, all creatures in heaven and earth shall be struck with terror, except those whom God shall please to exempt from it. The earth will be shaken, all buildings and mountains leveled. Women who give suck shall abandon the care of their infants.

At the second blast, all creatures in heaven and earth shall die, or be annihilated, except those whom God shall please to exempt from that common fate. The last to die will be the angel of death. Forty years of rain will follow when the third blast is sounded, and all dead bodies shall

be raised for judgment. The resurrection will be general and extend to all creatures, angels, genii, men and animals(1).

Mankind shall then be assembled for reckoning. The ungodly and the wicked will appear on that day with certain distinguishing marks fixed on them. These will come under ten headings namely (a) the backbiters, (b) they who have been greedy of filthy lucre, and who have enriched themselves by public oppression, (c) the usurers, (d) unjust judges, (e) they who exult in their own works, (f) the learned men or preachers whose actions contradicted their sayings, (g) they who have 'injured their neighbors, (h) the false accusers and informers, (i) they who have indulged their passions and voluptuous appetites (j) the proud and the arrogant people.

The first men to be sentenced to hell fire, will be the hypocrites who deceived people, by falsely pretending to do good works for the sake of God, though they did them only in order, that their fellow-men might extol their actions.

The object of Resurrection is, that they who are so raised, may give an account of their actions, and receive their reward thereof.

On that day, mankind is all assembled together. They will not be immediately brought to judgment. They have to wait for that purpose a long time. During this period of waiting, the resuscitated shall suffer both the just and unjust; but the sufferings of the former shall be light in comparison. Men shall resort to their respective prophets for intercession that they may be redeemed from that painful situation, and be called upon for trial. Eventually the Prophet Mohammad shall accept the office of intercession, after it has been declined by former prophets who shall beg deliverance only for their own souls. Belief in the Prophet's intercession is enjoined upon Muslims, as part of the fifth article of faith.

The above intercession accepted, men shall be ordered, to appear for judgment. On this occasion, the books, wherein the actions of every person had been recorded by their guardian angels, will be distributed to

(1) Koran, Ch ixxxi.

their respective owners. God will command the various Apostles, to bear witness against those, to whom they have been respectively sent. Then every person will be examined concerning his action in his life not, as if God needed an information in this respect, but to oblige the person to make public confession and acknowledgment of God's justice.

The next event to take place after the resurrection is over is the ordeal of the resurrection balance, wherein the weights of all men's actions shall be weighed. According as the good or evil actions shall preponderate, sentence will be given; those whose balances are laden with good works, will be saved; but those whose balances are light, will be condemned. Belief in this balance also forms an essential part of the fifth article of Faith[1].

The above examination being past, and every one's actions weighed in a just balance, mutual retaliation will follow, according to which all persons will have satisfaction for the injuries they suffered. The manner of giving this satisfaction will be by taking away a proportionate part of the good works of him who did the injury, and adding it to those of him who suffered. If, after this is done there remains of a person's good works as much as equals the weight of an ant, God will, of His mercy, cause it to be doubled to him, that he may be admitted to Paradise. But if, on the contrary, a person's good works be exhausted, and there remain evil works only, and there be any who have not yet received satisfaction from him, God will, of his justice, order that an equal weight of their sins be added to his, that he may be punished for them in their stead, and be laden with both. This will be the method of dealing with mankind.

As to brutes, after they have been punished for the injuries which they caused each other, God will command them, to be turned into dust. Wicked men being reserved for more grievous punishment they shall cry out, on hearing this sentence pronounced on the brutes:

*"World to God that we were dust also."*

(1) "The old Jewish writers make mention as well of the books to be produced at the last day, wherein men's action are registered, as of the balance, wherein they shall be weighed; and the Scriptures themselves seem to have given the first notion of both". (G. Sale. Prelim. Disc.)

After the trial is over, those who are to be admitted into paradise, as well as those destined to hell, shall have to pass to their respective abodes, over a bridge, laid over the midst of hell. This bridge is so wonderfully fashioned, that the good shall cross with ease and swiftness to paradise, while the infidels and the wicked shall miss their footing, and fall down headlong into hell.

Belief in this bridge is essential, to complete the article of creed of the Day of Resurrection.

The infidels alone shall be doomed to eternal damnation. Those who have embraced the true religion of God, even if they have been guilty of atrocious crimes, shall be delivered from hell, after they have expiated their sins by their sufferings. The orthodox doctrine of the Muslim Religion is, that no infidel who denied the existence of God, or anyone who did not believe in the unity of God, shall ever be redeemed; but no person who has believed in the existence and unity of God, shall be committed to eternal punishment.

As to whether paradise and hell are already existent, or are to be created hereafter, the orthodox doctrine of Islam is, that they were created even before the world.

The felicity of the righteous in paradise, and the pains of the wicked in hell, will vary in degree, according to their merits or demerits, respectively. The happiness and felicity of the dwellers of paradise on the one hand, and the anguish and pains of the inhabitants of hell, on the other, are according to the orthodox doctrine, sensuous and material, both body and soul being entitled or subject to them, respectively. But, the most happy will find the joy of joys, to consist in the beatific visions of the soul in the presence of God. The Prophet said:

> *"The most favored of God will be he who shall see the face (the glory) of his Lord, night and morning, a felicity which will surpass all the pleasures of the body, as the ocean surpasses a drop of sweat."*

The reward of virtue will not be confined to an exact measure of man's good works; it will far exceed his deserts. But the recompense of evil will be strictly proportioned to what a man has done.

*"They who do right, shall receive a most excellent reward, and a superabundant addition; neither darkness nor shame shall cover their faces; these shall be the inhabitants of paradise; they shall continue therein for ever. But they who commit evil, shall receive the reward of evil, equal thereunto, and they shall be covered with shame, as though their faces were veiled with pieces of nights of profound darkness."*[1]

The foregoing is all that is incumbent upon a true Muslim to believe, concerning the Day of Resurrection.

Finally I must, before quitting this chapter, refute a falsehood of vulgar imputation on Mohammedans who are reported, by some Christian writers, to believe, that women have no souls, or, if they have, that they will perish, like those of brutes, and will not be rewarded in the next life. Commenting on this false charge, Mr. G. Sale made the following pertinent observation:

*"...it is certain that Mohammed had too great a respect for the fair sex, to teach such a doctrine and there are several passages in the Koran which affirm, that women, in the next life, will not only be punished for their evil actions, but will also receive the good deeds, as well as the men, and that in this case God will make no distinction of sexes."* [2]

## *6. Predestination*

The sixth pillar of the Mohammedan faith is the belief in predestination. Whatever has, or shall come to pass in this world whether it is good or evil, proceeds entirely from the divine will, and has been irrevocably created after a fixed decree. The Koran distinctly states

*"All things have been created after a fixed decree".*
*(Koran: 54: 49).*

(1) Koran: 10: 26-27.
(2) G. Sale Prelim. Disc.

*"No one can die, except by God's purpose, according to the Book that fixeth the term of life". (Koran: 3: 145).*

*"The Lord hath created and balanced all things, and hath fixed their destinies and guided them'... (Koran: 87: 2-3).*

*"Say: By no means can aught befall us, but what God hath predestined for us". (Koran: 9: 51).*

*"God creates what He will". (Koran: 24: 45).*

*"... nor is there any thing not provided beforehand by us, or which we send down, otherwise than according to a foreknown decree."(Koran: 15: 21)*

*"... and who (God) created all things, and determined respecting the same, with absolute determination". (Koran: 25: 2).*

The following are also a few sayings of the Holy Prophet, bearing on God's predetermination:

*"... and God said to Adam: 'I have created this family for paradise, and their actions will be like unto those of the people of paradise and God said to him: 'I have created this family for hell and their actions will be like unto those of the people of hell.'" Hearing the above teaching of the Prophet, a man said to him: "of what use then will deeds of any kind be?" The Prophet said: "When God createth His servant for Paradise, his actions will be deserving of it, until he die, when he will enter therein; and when God createth one for the fire, his actions will be like those of the people of hell, till he die, when he will enter therein".*

The Prophet of God also said to his companions:

*"There is no one amongst you whose place is not predestined by God, whether in hell or in paradise". The companions said, 'O Prophet of God, since God hath pre-appointed our places, may we confide in this belief, and abandon our religious and moral duties?' He said: 'No' because the righteous will do good works and be obedient to God, and the wicked will do bad works': after*

*which the Prophet recited the following verses of the Koran: "To him who giveth alms, and feareth God; and yields assent to the excellent creed, to him will we make easy the path to happiness. But to him who is worldly, and is indifferent, and who does not believe in the excellent creed, to him we 'will make easy the path to misery".*

The Prophet of God also said:

*"The first thing which God created, was (divine) pen, and He said to it, 'Write', it said, 'What shall I write" And God said 'Write down the fate of every individual thing to be created, and accordingly the Pen wrote all that was, and that will be, to eternity."*

The Prophet also said:

*"God hath predestined five things to his servants; their duration of life, their actions, their dwelling places, their travels and their portions".*

It happened, that one of the companions said to the Prophet:

*"O Prophet of God, inform me respecting the medicines which I swallow, and the shields which I make use of for protection, whether they can resist any of the decrees of God?" The Prophet answered: "These also are by the decree of God."*

The Prophet of God once came out of his house, when the companions were debating about fate, and he was angry, and became red in the face. And he said:

*"Hath God ordered you to debate of fate? Was I sent to you for this? Your forefathers were undone through debating about fate and destiny. I conjure you not to argue on those points."*

The doctrine of predestination, as forming an essential part of the Mohammedan orthodox faith, may be summarized in the following terms:

A Muslim should believe in his heart, and confess with his tongue, that the most exalted God hath decreed all things; so that nothing can happen in the world, whether it respects the conditions and operations of things, or good or evil, or obedience or disobedience, or sickness or health, or riches or poverty, or life or death, which is not contained in the written tablet of the decrees of God. But God hath so decreed good works, obedience, and faith that He ordains and wills them that they may be under His decree, His salutary direction, His good pleasure and command. On the other hand, God hath decreed and does ordain and determine evil, disobedience and infidelity; yet without His salutary direction, good pleasure and command; but only by way of temptation and trial. Whosoever shall say, that God hath not indignation against evil and unbelief, he is certainly an infidel.

The doctrine of predestination, or the absolute decree of event, both good and evil, is a recognized element in many creeds.(1) This doctrine has given rise to as much controversy among the Muslims, as it did among Christians; but the former, generally, believe in predestination, as being in some respects conditional.(2)

Five points, however, arise from the doctrine of predestination, as given in detail in the following formula:

1. If the destiny of man is determined by the divine purpose, how can we explain man's freedom of choice? Man is absolutely conscious of personal freedom of action, which it is impossible to deny.

2. If man is affected, in all his actions, by eternal predestination, what then is the meaning of human conduct, and the individual accountability which is the mainspring of moral life?

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(1) We read the following Statement in Chamber's Encyclopedia:

"The doctrine of predestination is explicitly enunciated In Rom. 8:29f 9, 10, 11, and Eph. 1: 4f, 11, and it is a recognized element in many creeds (e.g. Conf. of Faith, III: Church of England Articles, XVII.) Further we read in the same work: "The Apostle Paul was doubtless aware of inconsistency for it was a crux of Jewish theology (see Ederstein's Jesus the Messiah, 1: 316ff.); but the Apostle was accustomed, to Isolate any particular doctrine, as occasion required, without being careful, to reconcile it with the real or apparent antithesis. (See Chamber's Cyc. Art. Predestination).

(2) Sec. "The manners and customs of the Modern Egyptian", by Ed. Lana p. 69.

3. If what is to be, must be, with the overruling and irrevocable Decree of God, what is the use of divine commands and prohibitions, rewards and punishments, promises and threats, and after all, what is the use of Prophets, Books etc.

4. Some acts of man are bad, such as tyranny, polytheism, robbery, etc. If they are predestined and predetermined by God, it follows, that to tyrannize, to ascribe plurality to God, or to rob is to render obedience to Him, which obviously enough, is not the case.

5. If infidelity and sin are decreed by God, it follows that God is in favor of sin and infidelity, but to speak thus of God is blasphemy.

I will answer these questions as briefly as possible, not from a philosophical point of view, but from a strictly religious aspect, this book being devoted exclusively to matters of purely religious nature.

The apparent contradiction involved in the doctrine of predestination, may be reasonably solved by considering, that man is not acquainted, in this life with anything of what has been predestined for him by the Almighty God. Therefore, it cannot be suggested, that under the doctrine of predestination, man's personal freedom of choice and action is affected in any way, Man is so created by All-Powerful God, that he is sensible of a personal free will, choice and action, so that belief in predestination by no means interferes with his moral freedom. To speak of man as a free agent, we mean that he is not withheld from action by any external cause, that, morally, he is neither a prisoner, nor a slave, nor paralyzed, nor otherwise disabled. Next, we may apply the term "free" to the eternal or psychological decision which he is externally free to carry out. In this sense, the freedom of an action evidently consists in the fact, that the action proceeds from the intelligent choice of the agent, and such choice is plainly and strongly contrasted with the mechanical determination which exists in the physical world.

As God's predestination is altogether a secret to man, human beings are in all ages, made acquainted, through God's prophets, with what duties they should perform, and what prohibitions they must respect, so that no act of disobedience, on the part of man, can be justified on the

plea of ignorance of what he ought or ought not to do, or on the plea, that man was actuated to disobey or to sin, by divine decree. Man is not cognizant of anything he was predestined to do, whether it be good or bad, until he has committed it, by his own choice and own freedom of will, of which he was quite conscious. It is then and only then, that a man realizes, that his act was predestined. On the other hand, God's predestination has ever been associated with divine foreknowledge of all human character and conditions As the Almighty God predestined a man to sin, God at the same time, foreknew that man would commit the sinful deed, while acting by his own free and intelligent choice. A sinful man can on no account shun the moral responsibility for his deeds, on the plea of having acted upon irrevocable divine predestination, of which he was totally ignorant. Being absolutely conscious of a personal freedom of will and action, an evil doer cannot reasonably justify his action by referring to predestination. In fact, belief and faith in divine predestination can neither necessitate denial of human consciousness of freedom of will, nor eliminate the factor of individual responsibility from human conduct. So long as man is conscious of personal freedom of will, choice and action within himself, the sense of individual accountability which is the mainspring of moral life, always remains untouched. The said belief, therefore, should neither interfere with man's enthusiasm for progress nor deprive him from freedom of will, which faculty he is, undoubtedly, conscious of enjoying.

To believe in heart, as an orthodox Jew, Christian or Muslim is bound to, that whatsoever one had to do, right or wrong, whatsoever has befallen one, the minutest movement of man, and the meanest event of his life, has been irrevocably predestined by God from eternity; and that no amount of effort to the contrary can alter the course of events predestined by the absolute divine authority, such a purely religious dogma can, on no account interfere with any amount of human morality. The doctrine of predestination does not imply denial of man's freedom of will and action. Each component part of man is bound by religion, to fulfill some function: the heart and conscience, to believe in God, His attributes and His predestination the other external members of man, to work, each according to its respective faculty and aptitude, as recommended by the law. Now, if the heart fulfils its proper function, namely: to believe that nothing whatsoever that has happened, or will happen in the universe, is contrary to the will of God, the function of no

other member is necessarily offended or retarded, as it cannot be suggested, that, under such a religious belief in God and His divine attributes, the eyes shall be prevented from seeing, the ears from hearing, the feet from walking, the tongue from speaking, or any other part of man, from the proper discharge of its respective duty.

Therefore, it is quite unfair and illogic for anyone to claim, that faith in predestination, as required by orthodox religion, tends to damp all enthusiasm for progress. Such a claim might be reasonably admitted, only if a man were given accurate foreknowledge of his fate and destiny. If he knew, for instance, from the beginning, that he was doomed to perdition, he might, very naturally, make no effort to resist his destiny, and no attempt at progress: or seeing that he was predestined to salvation, he might make no effort to deserve it. Man, having no foreknowledge whatsoever of his own destiny, his duty lies absolutely in adherence to the law. As far as man's intelligent free action is concerned, he has nothing more to do with the eternal decrees of God, than to have perfect faith in them.

Reason and logic, both dictate to man the belief in God, the One, the sole Creator, and the absolute Disposer. In like manner, as a cultivator cannot rightly claim to be creator of his own harvest, so it is the case with man: he cannot rightly claim to be independently the originator of actions. The Islamic doctrine of predestination may be reduced to two distinct beliefs:

1- That God has determined the destiny of man, not only according to the foreknown character of those whose fate is so determined, but also according to God's own will. There is no dispute on this point between divines of all creeds. Judaism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam, all not agree and acquiesce in this, but they unreservedly admit it, and emphatically declare any possible notion to the contrary to be blasphemy.[1]

2- That man is directly responsible for his own actions, so long as he is master of his free choice. As man is certainly sensible, that he is morally a free agent, he is accountable for all actions affected by his

(1) Chamber's Molesworth'a Eneyclopoedla art. Predestinattoab.

volitional power. In the Koran we read that God does not saddle a man with responsibility beyond his capacity to bear. There is a vast sphere of human activity, where man's apparent will enjoys freedom of control and direction. Consequently, a man is held responsible, by religion, for the right or wrong exercise of his faculties. It is therefore, a matter of the deepest concern to man, to ascertain the rules and regulations which should guide his conduct in that connection. To supply this need, the All-Merciful God has endowed man with intellect, and revelation. By the help of intellect man endeavors to work out his moral and spiritual evolution in all his dealings with his Creator and his fellow creatures. But man's obligation towards God and man, surely involves complications too delicate for unaided human reason. The result of an intellectual error might be the violation of human or divine laws. Hence, the absolute necessity of direct guidance and laws from God to make up for the frailties of reason, and to enlighten man, as to how he ought to regulate his relations with his Maker, as well as with his fellowmen. In obedience to these laws, man can carry out his duties, and attain what is best in life. Laws relating to human life have been summed up in the following verse of the Holy Koran:

> *"Surely God orders justice and good works (to all), and (orders) kindness to relation, and He condemns indecency, illicit deeds, and all wrong. He admonishes you, that you may be mindful."(Koran: 16: 90)*

With regard to man's guidance as to his relation to God, the Holy Koran tells us:

> *"Say: my sacrifice, my life, my death, is for God, the Lord of the worlds Who has no partner with Him. This I have been ordered, and am the first to submit."(Koran: 6: 162)*

In carrying out his duties in life, man must not lose sight of God's ordinances, and of what He desires of him, so that he should in no way satisfy himself or his fellow creatures, by disobeying the Universal Cherisher of all, the Creator of all.

Through his faith in predestination man can behave faithfully and righteously, since he is confident, that all power, help and sustenance lie

only with Him. Man's duty is, to spare no effort in observing the injunctions of his Maker, and then he is quite safe.

Prosperity and plenty often tempt man to turn away from God. Touching this point, the Holy Koran says:

> *"O believers let not your wealth or your children make you forget to remember your God." (Koran: 63: 9)*

Man makes use frequently of wealth or uses these blessings of God, as a means to encroach upon the rights of others, or as an encouragement to neglect his devotional duties towards God. Therefore the Holy Book wishes it to be remembered, the temptation lies hidden under the enjoyment of wealth and offspring.

Even as man is liable to temptation by abundant prosperity so is he apt to be retarded from the fulfillment of his duties by misfortunes, however, having perfect faith in predestination, a true believer will not forget, that what happens, good or bad, has been predetermined and decreed by God, and that the inevitable must come to pass, in spite of human efforts to the contrary.

Therefore he is bound to submit himself cheerfully and resignedly to all trials. Referring to this, the Holy Koran says:

> *"And We will most certainly try you with some fear and hunger and loss of lives and fruits (therefore), O Prophet! give good tidings to the patient who, when misfortune befalls them, say: Verily, we belong to God, and to Him we shall verily return. Those (the patient) are they, on whom heavenly blessings and mercy from Lord will descend and those are the followers of the right course."(Koran: 2: 155-157)*

Thus Islam teaches that misfortunes serve as good tidings, and as forerunners of heavenly blessings. And with a heart full of faith in predestination, a true believer cheerfully submits to hardships and trials. Those having a submissive frame of mind under adverse circumstances "On them," says the Holy Koran, "descend the blessings of God." With Islam, a calamity is a mercy in disguise. Alive to the purpose of divine

will, a believing Muslim resigns himself with a cheerful heart to his fate. It is God who alone governs the universe and disposes thereof, according to His eternal and irrevocable Will. One of the comfort-giving verses of the Koran reads as follows:

> *"Say: O God, Who art Owner of the Kingdom: Thou givest authority, to whom Thou wilt; and Thou takest away authority, from whom Thou wilt; Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou humblest whom Thou wilt; in Thy hand is all the good, and Thou art Omnipotent. Thou makest the night to enter into the day, and Thou makest the day to enter into the night (Thou) bringest forth the living out of the dead, and (Thou) bringest, forth the dead out of the living, and (Thou) providest sustenance, to whom Thou wilt, and even so without limit".(Koran: 3: 26-27)*

Thus, under conditions of hardship and misfortune, a true believer will not neglect his duties towards God. With the utterance of his noted formula, *"To God we belong, and to Him shall we return"*, he submits to adversity, and goes on with his duties uninterrupted. On the other hand, if good fortune and prosperity be his luck, he is not to put distrust in abundance and plenty, and so forget his duties towards his Maker, Sustainer and Nourisher. He is warned by revelation, not to make these very blessings of God a pretext for encroachment upon the rights of others, and thus change them into a curse for himself.

With regard to freedom of human will, the Holy Prophet of Islam has positively declared man's undisputed right, to make a choice between good and evil. Again and again, in the Holy Koran, this point has been emphasized, lest man should forget his own responsibility for his conduct. Indeed, the whole trend of Koranic ethics points in this direction.

> *"Say the Truth is from your Lord, whosoever may wish, he may believe; and whosoever may wish, he may disbelieve,"* says the Holy Koran.

God has moreover pointed out to man the right path, and ordered him to follow it, and the wrong one and warned him against taking it. In this respect the Koran says:

*"Verily, we have shown to man the right path; he may be grateful or ungrateful," meaning there is no compulsion, on the part of God, felt by man to bear upon him to adopt this course or that."*

Again we read: "*Verily this is reminder to all people; for those of you who wish to take the right course.*" Here too, man has been let alone in the matter of selection. Further on: "*it is for God only, to furnish strong proof, and if He so pleased (to influence man), He would have guided you all.*" This means, that Almighty God has chosen to let man feel, that he is a free agent who acts under an intelligent free will. Denial of interference cannot be made in clearer terms. If God were to restrain man's personal moral freedom, He would not have let a single man go astray. "*If God were pleased, He would have brought together the whole of humanity into one and the same path*", namely, the path of righteousness. But He has so ordained that He made man to feel that there is no compulsion brought to bear upon him, to incline him this way or that. Man is absolutely conscious of being master of himself and the organizer of his own career. He is given power, by which he can accomplish his own desires, in virtue of the moral freedom which he enjoys. However, according to Islam, the power of self-government, with which we are endowed, is a trust, and not a free gift. It not only entrusts our own destiny to ourselves, but it actually trusts, or seems to trust, the whole final outcome of God's creative work to our treatment of it. This earth at least, is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and of ourselves, its inhabitants. To this effect, the Holy Koran says:

> *"We have proposed the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they refused to undertake the same, and were afraid to undertake it; but man undertook it, (yet) he is verily unjust and ignorant."*(Koran: 33: 72)

This means that of all God's creations man alone accepted the trust of moral freedom which makes him master of himself, and dignifies and exalts him among the creatures of God. Gifts of all other sorts are nothing, to compare with it. If we had not the power to rule our own actions by our own will, we should be infinitely poorer in moral worth than we are now. Therefore, man should be anxious to be dignified in this respect, but the Holy Koran, in the above verse, asserts, that man is unjust and ignorant in this connection. He is unjust, in that he abuses his moral freedom, in

choosing to do wrongful deeds, instead of righteous ones. And he is ignorant in that he gives no heed to the consequences of his choice because doing what we know that we ought to do, is not only for the good of the world, but likewise, and far more, for the good of ourselves. We derive infinitely more benefit from our own performance of an act of uprightness; and infinitely more harm from an act of wrong, than the good we bestow, or the harm we inflict. The good or ill we do, goes deeply into our nature, refines or coarsens it, lifts or lowers it, and is either inspiring or deadening to all that is best in soul and mind. Few men reach old age without saying sadly. "Oh that I could live my life again," because, time has shown them their youth for a different development of themselves and a different shaping of their lives. In this connection the Holy Koran says:

> *"Say, O, my worshippers, who have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God: seeing that God forgiveth all sins, for He is Gracious and Merciful. And be turned unto your Lord, and resign yourselves unto Him, before the punishment comes suddenly upon you, and ye perceive not (the approach thereof); when a soul shall say 'Alas' for that I have been negligent in my duty towards God; verily, I have been one of the scorners;' or say: 'If God had directed me, verily. I had been one of the pious;' or say, when it seeth the prepared punishment: 'If I could return once more into the world, I would become one of the righteous.' But God shall answer: 'My signs came unto thee heretofore, and thou didst charge them with falsehood, and wast puffed up with pride; and thou becamest one of the unbelievers." (Koran: 39: 53-59)*

In brief, it is reasonable, as well as it is universally religious, to believe, that nothing whatsoever, be it a circumstance, an action or a thought, can take place against the will of God. Again, nothing can happen in the world either as proceeding from a human being an animal, or a thing, which God had not, from eternity, known and willed it to be. By "willed" is here meant the proper acceptation of the word namely, 'allowed'; it does not mean God's pleasure, nor acceptance or inclination in respect to man's evil deeds.

There is nothing contradictory, in holding the belief in absolute predestination and the belief in self responsibility.

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